NEW TIMES

Alternatives for **conscientious objectors?**

March 12–18, 1991

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A SOVIET WEEKLY OF WORLD AFFAIRS

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Let's roll our sleeves up!

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He climbed the ladder to the sleeping one

LEONID TISHKOV

A SOVIET WEEKLY OF WORLD AFFAIRS

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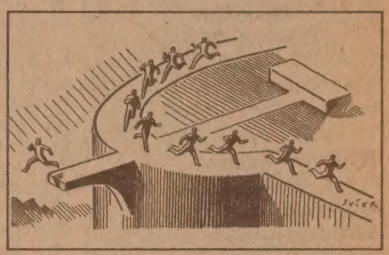

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From our mailbag

■ The artile by Marina Shakina "Moldova: First Blood" (*NT* No.46/90) contains a lot of correct and valuable information, but its author has failed to get rid of old dogmas and stereotypes.

Speaking about separatists, Shakina mentions people living along the Dniester River, the Gagauzes, the Balts and the Georgians. But if people living along the Dniester River and the Gagauzes struggle for their national rights (first of all for the right to be masters in their own land and live according to their own customs), the Balts, the Georgians and the Moldavians struggle for their national privileges: for the right to be masters of other peoples whom they call migrants and occupiers. If the centre supports the Gagauzes and the people living along the Dniester River, Moldova will withdraw from the USSR, writes the author. Indeed, the leadership of Moldova is blackmailing the government of the USSR, stating that in the case of such support, the republic will withdraw from the Union. What can one say about this? First, such bargaining is immoral and does not do credit to both sides. Second, human rights cannot be the subject of bargaining.

If Moldova wants to withdraw from the USSR, this decision should be made after a referendum. In the case of its withdrawal, it must pay the Soviet Union compensation for the accelerated development of industry, agriculture and major construction work. All those who will have to leave Moldova should be also paid a compensation.

It is great pity that the Gagauzes and the people living along the Dniester River cannot find support either with the leadership of the Union or that of the RSFSR.

L.Sribner
Odessa, USSR

■ Your reader M.Shukhovtsev ("From our mailbag" *NT* No.47/90) rails against the magazine because it has "degenerated." But in fact it has regenerated! *Pravda*, for example, has degenerated and by November, in Magadan only 600 out of 9,000 CPSU members subscribed to that newspaper. Yours is a decent magazine which is valued most of all. My family and I read it from cover to cover. What other publication will publish letters of prisoners from our slave-holding territory. We live in a lawless state with millions of broken lives where the abasement of human dignity and discrimination against dissidents are in the order of the day. I have been paying Party dues for almost 27 years – money that could have been better spent on bringing up my daughter. I have paid over 2,000 rubles – but how has that money been spent? Last year I left the party and began to face discrimination: now I am out of work and although I have a higher economic education, I had to take a job of a guard. Should one also call this socialism? All this has made me take part in the activities of the Magadan anti-communist league.

S.Podgrebelnaya
Magadan, USSR

Religion, morals and anti-Semitism

■ "Anti-Semitism is the absence of culture," writes the Polish philosopher Leszek Kolakowski (*NT* No.46/90). It would be too simple if anti-Semitism idicated merely an absence of culture. Citing a few names of Jews – the creators of moden culture (Heinrich Heine, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, Marc Chagall), Kolakowski suggests that they are hated by anti-Semites only for being Jewish and that that hatred has nothing to do with their creative work. For a certain level of anti-Semitism that is, of course, true. But anti-Semites criticize the creative work of these people, believing that Heine's irony, Marx's revolutionary character, Freud's psychoanalysis and Chagall's modernism is the embodiment of the Jewry. That varied embodiment of the Jewry is perceived by them as a total threat to the culture world with which they identify themselves. Indeed, if Marc Chagall is the standard target of an anti-Semite, one can hardly see Levitan in this shooting-gallery – his creative work does not lend itself to interpretation as "Jewish."

I don't venture to judge whether the assertion that "as a rule, anti-Semites are good Christians" is correct in the case of Poland.

But if we are to speak about this phenomenon in principle, modern anti-Semitism, unlike that of the Middle Ages, has not the religious, but a distinctly racial character, although, of course, it sometimes falls back on religion. Moreover, it is as the result of the collapse of religious world view that modern anti-Semitism has come about. Extreme anti-Semite groups in the USSR interpret Christianity as a total fraud thrust on mankind by Jews.

I would also like to take exception to another one of Kolakowski's theses: anti-Semitism is always a tool of social reaction and is incompatible with the traditions of the revolutionary movement. On the face of it this thesis sounds very convincing and is graphically proved by the today's alignment of political forces in the USSR where anti-Semitism has become one of the symbols of the reaction and the democrats state their contempt for anti-Semitism. The question is whether such an approach can be regarded as the universally correct one. Some 110 years ago, Russia witnessed one of the most tragic events in the history of its Jewish population – the pogroms of 1881. At that time, this instigation was carried on not only by right-wingers, but also by some revolutionaries who regarded anti-Semitism as a handy tool for stiring up social discontent.

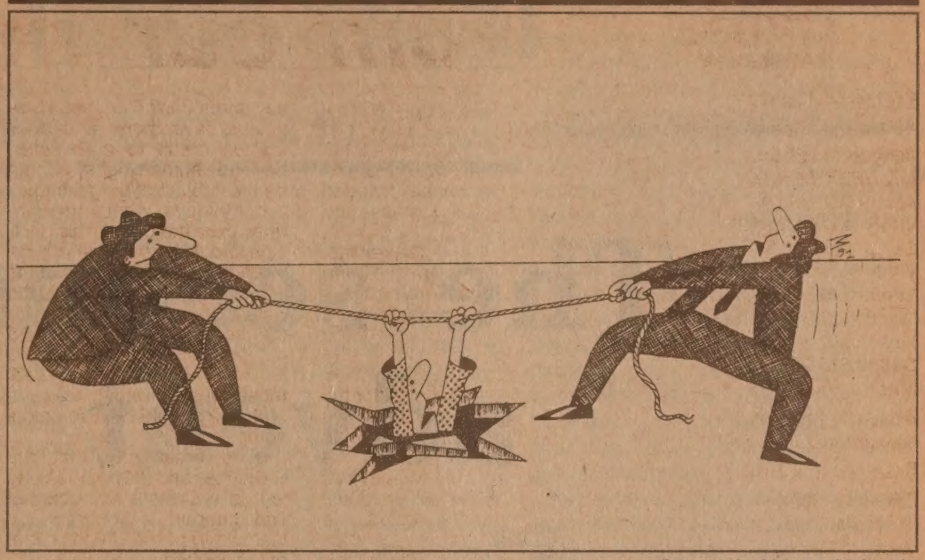
History shows that a political position per se cannot act as a guarantor of morals. Both the democratic and conservative movements can have leaders (not to mention rank and file members) who are poisoned with the venom of anti-Semitism or who cynically use it for achieving their tactical goals.

Mikhail Gorelik
Moscow, USSR

If Moldova wants to withdraw from the Union – let it pay a compensation

Is Vilnius a Byelorussian or a Lithuanian city?

"Why I became an anti-communist"



Drawing by Valentin Mokievsky

■ I was promted to write in by Academician Alexander Yakovlev's article "Conversion: a Global Challenge (*NT* No.35/90). I think that his last articles are a brilliant example of Party political journalism. I would also like to point to another paradox of our critical times: ostracized at the Party Congress, this former member of Politburo gave a scientific analysis of the present situation in the Party and in the country.

But I cannot agree with him that it is only now that we have begun to face the problem of understanding by each individual of his personal responsibilities for his contribution to the creation of means of mass destruction which in itself requires tremendous courage. Today the story of the creation of the nuclear power station in Obninsk has become a textbook case. But few people know that this project was not financed by the government. The Party and state leaders did not give the priority to the research in the field of peaceful use of nuclear energy. Scientists and designers were expected first of all to develop new types of nuclear weapons. And it was only thanks to the personal insistence of Academicians Anatoly Alexandrov and Nikolai Dollezhal that it became possible to create a functioning prototype of a whole generation of Soviet nuclear power stations.

By what standard can one measure the personal courage and moral conviction of the leading designer of Soviet nuclear weapons Andrei Sakharov, who in the late 1960s, stuck his neck out by creating at one of the secret sites a research laboratory that collected unique information about the influence of nuclear tests on health?

I hope that *New Times* will publish material on the creators of the Soviet system of weapons who as early as in the years of the Cold War were doing all they could to prevent the use of those weapons.

Nikolai Muzrukov,
Lecturer, Institute of the Russian Language
Prague, Czecho-Slovakia

A monologue against the market

■ I enjoy the quality of writing but find that *New Times*' uncritical romanticizing of free market economies, along with pretty naive socialism-bashing, a bit hard to stomach. To imply that all our troubles come from the lack of a so-called free market is rubbish. I can understand, when things seem to be falling apart, that it's natural to look elsewhere for models. But what purpose is served when today you indiscriminately criticize what you extolled to the skies yesterday? The earlieset memories I have of my Kiev-born parents was their near talmudic need for ideological purity. It was simply a dogmatic faith in communism. But when Marxism proved not to be a near religious panacea they turned on it with a resolution only a psychiatrist could understand. In doing so, they turned their backs on all their best instincts for social equality and died lonely and embittered – but wealthy.

Ultimately what differentiates socialism from capitalism is not the amout of vcrs attainable, but the aspiration of the former to provide human dignity. If events prove this naive, shouldn't *New Times* (and all of us) be weeping instead of relishing the inevitability that a few are born to be happy, while the rest have little alternative, but to have their labour and souls exploited. How can you hope to counter right-wing, nationalist groups without moral anchorings that go beyond nationalism? You cannot do this with tanks, and vanguard parties are suffocatingly elitist and sectarian. Churchill had good reasons to say that democracy may be the worst system... excepting all the others.

Here in Australia we have a socialist government. But the private entrepreneurial sector is making daily headlines for its mismanagement, poor judgement and outright thievery. But we don't too often wrap ourselves in the ultimate ideological inhumanity of the marketplace!

Thomas Richman
Australia

■ Your reader M.Chudakov (*NT* No.20/90) is wrong when he claims that Byelorussia was centered around Vilnius.

Vilnius was founded early in 1300. The name "Vilnius" relates to the same root word as the Lithuanian word "vilnis" – wave, sea. The Polish version "Wilno" was used for centuries, and it is a translation of the Baltic original.

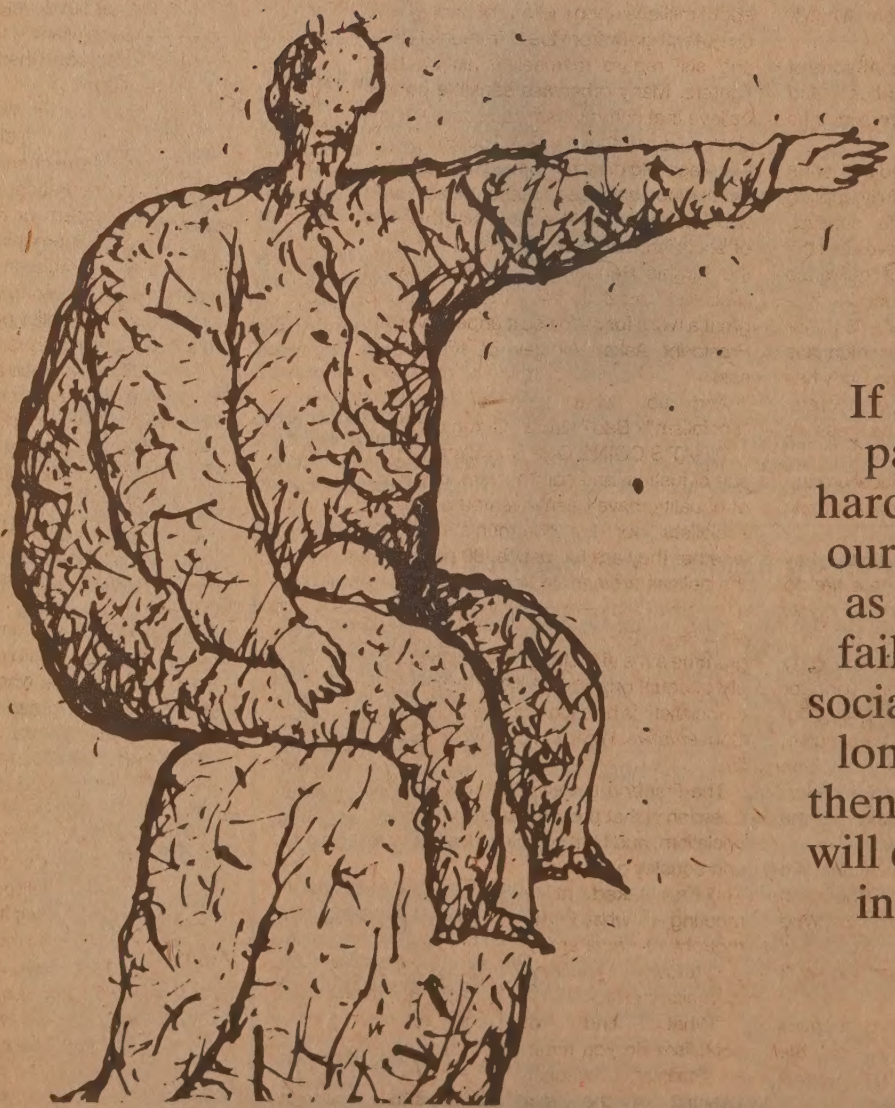
The author is quite correct in saying that Byelorussian was the official language of the Princedom of Lithuania; he is, however, mistaken in interpreting its dissemination. The Princedom was comprised of only 10 percent ethnic (Baltic) Lithuanians, hence the use of the Lithuanian language in the Princedom was limited. Latin was also an officially used language. In subsequent years, Polish became the official language, too. The Tsarist government used Rusasian as the official language, yet the general Lithuanian population continued to speak their own native language. The territory of Baltenland was once much larger – it streched from the Vistula to approximately the Upper Volga.

Sean Foley
Illinois, USA

Compiled by
Tatiana Chernova

POLITICAL LIFE

The second advent



If a nation as patient and hard-working as ours – as great as ours – has failed to build socialism over so long a period, then what nation will ever succeed in doing so?

WHAT'S GOING ON? The most serious of the latter-day developments – as far as its likely consequences are concerned – is described by the phrase one could hear in many statements made after the recent plenary session of the CPSU Central Committee: the Party is rising from the trenches, the Party is mounting an offensive. The Party leaders announced the news in the following phrases: "Those who lulled us into complacency, and whom we treated with kid gloves, are now tightening their stranglehold on the Party's throat."

From now on, the Party will no longer let anyone lull it into complacency, or treat anyone with kid gloves. Certain quarters are in for bad trouble. A war has been declared. Threats are being issued in every direction.

The Party which has emerged from the trenches is much different from what it used to be.

First of all, it has closed ranks. All sorts of "democratic platforms," critics and faultfinders have left it. It has regained its famous monolithic unity.

Second, the Party has ceased bothering about economic matters and fully applied itself to the political struggle for survival. This is a clever move which relieves it of the need to account for its record of "guidance and leadership." Having produced a system which is absolutely incapable of functioning without coercion and which has landed the country in a crisis, the Party has mounted an attack on the democrats, shifting to them the blame for the mess we are now in.

An aggresive (vanguard) political organization depends for its existence on an enemy and a goal.

The enemies have been named – they are the pseudo-democrats. There are no real democrats left in our country now, only "pseudo" and "quasi" ones.

The aim has been proclaimed. The Party is said to have gotten its second wind for building (another variant: reviving) socialism. "Who has proved that genuine, undistorted socialism has no future?" Ivan Polozkov, the leader of the Russian Federation's Communist Party, asks in the magazine *Kommunist*.

We have already heard questions like "What is to be done?" and "Who is to blame?" Next comes the question "Who can prove?"

As if what we see all around us isn't proof enough.

Thoughts about the likely consequences of the offensive planned and about the might of the force which is going to "revive" socialism are extremely unnerving.

The issue of socialism has divided us into those uncompromisingly "against" and those ivariably "for."

All this is not as simple as it appears to be at a first glance. Let us ask ourselves: why, despite all the criticisms, the hard realities and the historical facts the words "socialism" and "communism" come back again and again? Why do the words "anti-communist" and "anti-socialist" sound as menacing as ever in our leaders' speeches? Why are such persistent attempts being made to beautify the controversial notion by adjectives like "real," "mature," "developed," "democratic" and "humane"? What is "socialism with a human face"? Or, the latest invention, "industrial socialism"?

"Official" public speakers won't settle for anything but socialism, whatever its "face" or the adjective modifying it.

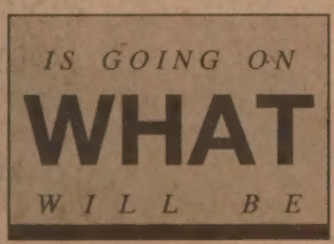
Mouthpieces of the Party aside, what about millions upon millions of people who do not withdraw from the Communist Party and still regard themselves as frontline fighters. Many otherwise sensible people believe that communism and socialism are sacred words, that they hold out the promise of age-old dreams coming true, that too much blood has been shed for these words to be made light of. Paradoxically, this view of socialism has prompted the leaders of the Kirghis Republic to cross the word "socialist" out of its full name: "This is too great a word for us to use it undeservedly," President Askar Akayev of Kirghizstan said.

And so, what kind of word is "socialism"? Bad? Great? Or too great?

WHAT'S GOING ON? Socialism, or pursuit of justice, and communism, or pursuit of equality, have been invented neither by socialists nor by communists. Asked whether they are for justice, 99 percent of the pollees are certain to reply "Yes." Are all of them Communists? The British Prime Minister John Major says that his programme aims at building "a classless society of equal opportunities" in Britain. Is he a Socialist? Is he a Communist? No, he is a Conservative. Well, what are we to make of it?

The first and the easiest answer to this question is that there are many varieties of socialism, and Gorbachev's idea of justice and equality differs from Major's. Asked at a meeting what he thought of socialism, a well-known political journalist replied:

"What kind of socialism do you mean – Stalinist, Swedish, Leninist of the year 1918, Leninist of the year 1921, early Marxist or late Marxist?"



There is a large variety of socialisms, ranging from early Marxist to late Leninist, to choose from. The word "socialism," however, is remarkable not so much for the variety of interpretations it offers, as for the contradiction inherent in it.

WHAT IS GOING ON? People's intense yarning for justice and equality manifests itself at the emotional, intellectual and volitional levels.

Emotional – or sentimental – socialism is a natural human aspiration to justice and freedom which has always existed and will always remain characteristic of man; therefore, most of us are dedicated sentimental socialists at heart. If the word "socialism" were banned today, underground societies of young socialists would emerge tomorrow.

This socialist aspiration is so intensely emotional that it could not but develop into intellectual theoretical socialism – first, in the shape of a literary utopia and then in the shape of scientific socialism.

Let us stop and ponder over the meaning of that habitual term – "scientific socialism." We refer to mechanics as theoretical, physics as theoretical or experimental, history as modern or recent, chemistry as organic or inorganic, and socialism as scientific. Communism is also called scientific. The word "scientific" is the cornerstone of all of socialist politics. Initially meant to distinguish a theory from pure utopia, this word has assumed a different meaning by now: today it signifies "solely true," "proven," "corresponding to the truth"; it sanctifies the activity of the Party and the building of socialism just as a monarch's divine origin legitimizes his rule. Empires are blessed by God, and socialism is "scientifically substantiated." Calls for "loyalty to scientific socialism" are heard today again.

The word "scientific" deals summarily with all the opponents of socialism making them look like obscurantists who have dared to challenge something sacrosanct – science, the most scientific of all sciences. In the same way, the Gospel is the alpha and omega of the truth for a believer.

THEORETICAL SOCIALISM. It is noteworthy that the theories of Marx and Engles neither diverged from emotional socialism, nor contradicted it.

In their time the working class was, indeed, hard-driven, the working hours were exhaustingly long. There is only one sixty-page chapter in *Das Kapital*, the rest

taking up 10 to 20 pages each. This long chapter is called "The Working Day." The Marxist teaching had the utilitarian purpose of protecting the working man, and reducing the working hours, above all.

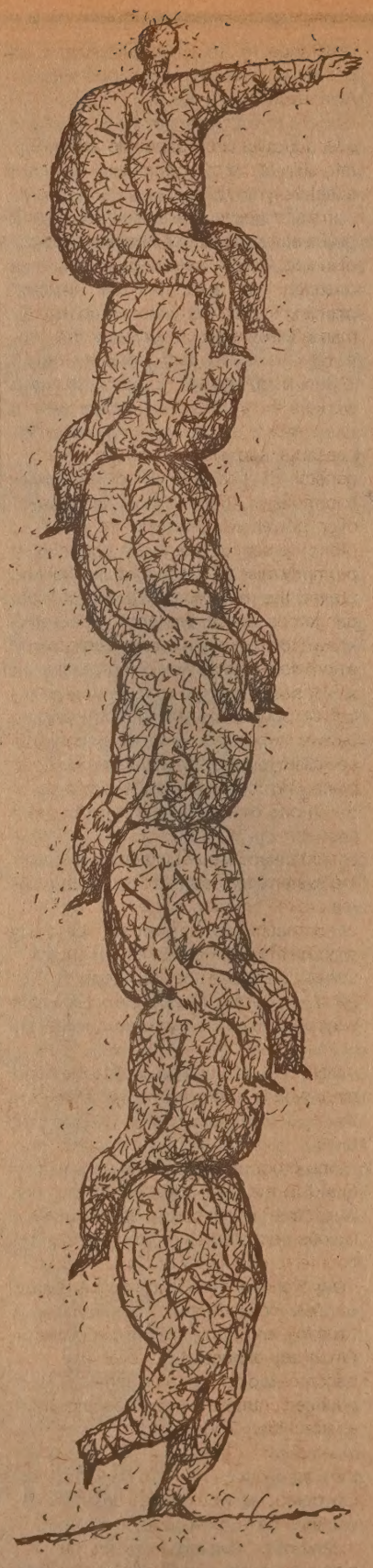
Marx and Engels were quite right. There was the division of labour. Labour was made a commodity. Narrow specialization had a deformational effect on the individual. There was capitalist exploitation. There was a lust for profit, the stifling morality which warped human relations and ruined families.

On the other hand, if you have forgotten your Marx, I suggest you reread *Das Kapital*. You will see a shining world, a world in which "the practical relations of every-day life offer the man none but perfectly intelligible and reasonable relations with regard to his fellowmen and to Nature."

A world which will be "treated as production by freely associated men, and... consciously regulated by them in accordance with a settled plan." Please note that this does not come from Marx's early partly romantic works, it comes from *Das Kapital* studied in most of the industrial workers' political education classes in the early 20th century.

Who is against that? Who can be against that? Now we are told that life should not be squeezed into artificial, stereotyped patterns, that the October Revolution was a conspiracy by a handful of revolutionaries (what's more, of dubious origin). To the conscious and thinking people of that time, however, the revolution meant a change from a drab and senseless routine to the reign of reason, to a free social union, to universal harmony. Marx's theoretical socialism fully coincided with emotional socialism inherent in most people, which explains why many intellectuals were Marxists at the beginning of this century. Besides this, the advent of Marxism coincided in time with the spread of atheism which had started in the middle of the past century. Socialism became a new faith, it discharged all the functions of a religion: provided guidelines for proper behaviour, offered an object of worship (the radiant future), afforded people an escape from their humdrum existence, and met their need to possess a lofty aim in life. Belief in God promised personal salvation, socialism promised social salvation. Everyone wants both, but some think salvation begins with self-perfection, and others respond to calls for restructuring society, for remaking the world. This is entirely a "matter of taste" rather than of one line of action being better than the other.

In a word, there were more than enough causes for a large-scale spread of Marxism.



Drawing by Igor Shein

And now we are coming to the point where the beauty of socialism ends and the horror of it begins. This point marks the transition from darkness to light, from slavery to freedom, from one world to another. For a religious person, this and the other worlds exist in parallel; for someone who believes in socialism, these worlds are incompatible. A transition is necessary. In our own case, the transition has taken three quarters of a century, and is still on. All our dramas and tragedies were explained away as inevitable concomitants of the transition period, and transition ideology was inculcated in us. All of us were drawn into a pursuit of illusions, all of us are victims of self-deception maintained by downright deception.

Marxism provided two opposite answers. One presupposed a natural course of events. A free social union of people and planned production required, according to Marx, "a certain material ground-work or set of conditions of existence which in their turn are the spontaneous product of a long and painful process of development."

History, however, has opted for a different road also indicated back at the end of the last century. It preferred violence and dictatorship, which bring quick results, to long and agonizing natural evolution.

VIOLENCE AND NON-VIOLENCE. As a matter of fact, the contradiction between violence and non-violence lies at the core of all human relations at all levels and in all forms. An elementary school teacher can answer any questions except one: should a child who is harassed by his coevals resign himself to his lot – or strike back? Either answer means more violence. There is no answer to this question, in principle. Such is the paradox of the world. Great religions and the greatest prophets of mankind call for non-violence but, alas, today's world is unthinkable without violence, and the supreme ideal – the universal elimination of violence – is being approached by civilization too slowly and with enormous difficulty.

All that is the best in this world rests on non-violence. What are justice, equality, brotherhood, freedom? These are all forms and manifestations of non-violence. What is the dream of socialism and communism? It is the dream of a non-violent world in which man does not oppress man in whatever form.

Herein lies the main contradiction of the word "socialism." Emotional socialism is all against violence. Theoretical socialism is practically all against violence. Marx's oft-quoted words to the effect that violence is the midwife of the old society when the latter is pregnant with a new one is a case

of misquotation, because in *Das Kapital* these words are directed against violence – colonial violence, in particular. How did the founders of Marxism visualize the dictatorship of the proletariat, how many murders, arrests and how much suffering did they regard as not too high a price to pay for the triumph of socialism? After emotional and theoretical socialism had given way to violent socialism, it entered into contradiction with its own self. The word "socialism" came to mean something directly opposite to what it had originally stood for.

Socialism is supposed to be non-violent throughout.

Socialism is an absolute emobodiment of violence.

When President Gorbachev talks about the socialist choice and about his adherence to the communist idea he obviously means what I have called, even though not quite accurately, emotional socialism, as follows from the context and all the modifications; Gorbachev upholds the ideas of democracy, freedom, he is all for progress and justice.

Gorbachev's colleagues in the Party are differently minded. Yegor Ligachev, for instance, has called recently for "revising certain provisions and theoretical guidelines put forward over the past few years." He strongly objects to "substituting the notion of socialism as a social system by the 'socialist idea'." Socialism is a system, he implies, and that's that.

SOCIALISM AS A SOCIAL SYSTEM. Because it goes counter to the natural order of things, socialism as a social system can be maintained solely by violence, which can be of three kinds: violence done to the microeconomy (private property ownership), violence done to the macroeconomy (economic planning), violence directed at man – all-pervading rule in its most ruthless, totalitarian form. As a social system, socialism can be neither human nor industrial – it can be only totalitarian, otherwise it will crumble.

Public property ownership, all-embracing planning and totalitarian rule – such are the three pillars of the socialist system and if you take away or weaken any of them, the other two will inevitably falter.

Now it has become "fashionable" to rail at the first-generation Bolsheviks and their successors for their amorality, ruthlessness and unscrupulousness; those people, however, were guided not by the logic of ethics or morality, but by the tough logic of power which called for a continuous expansion. Taken over by force, power breeds more power just as money, if cleverly invested, breeds more money. Life's resistance to an unnatural process imposed upon it necessitates new violence. As a result, ever more aspects of society's life fall under the ever tougher rule by an ever narrower circle of people until the dictatorship of the proletariat finally becomes absolute tyranny.

In a situation where all property is owned by the state, the latter needs all-embracing planning. Such planning presupposes coercion. In this triangle formed by power, planning and property there is no room for man left. Power for power's sake is a genetic disease of socialism and of the Party.

Socialism, originally intended to protect workers and the working people in general, has become an enemy of the workers, peasants and all the working people in general. It has intensified exploitation enormously. The idea that upon taking over power workers and peasants will promptly set the stage for communism, promptly raise their standard of culture has proved the most wretched and the most dangerous of all the social ideas ever known to mankind. It is impossible to build a non-violent society by violent means. The word "socialism" has become a mere symbol of power, like the sceptre and the crown. Whoever wears the crown of socialism has the right to the throne or to a place near it. Conversely, whoever sits on the throne or stands near it is obliged to proclaim his loyalty to socialism lest he should be accused of intending to change the system, to "capitalize the country," to restore the bourgeois order of things – i.e., of encroaching upon power, public property and the planned economy. It makes no sense to criticize the past record of the Party – it built socialism in the only possible way, and the result it got was inevitable.

AND STILL... Let's go back to the beginning: who is to be credited with the proof that true, undistorted socialism has no future?

The proof of that does exist. It is to be found in the very question, in the tricky word "true" which always figures in the fallacious questions of this kind. This counter-productive word is to be found in many works of our social science; we read of "true collectivism," "true humanism," "true folk art," "truly scientific approach..." When any aspect of our everyday reality becomes too odious to be upheld, it is pronounced untrue and out of keeping with an abstract idea. Today's advocates of renovated socialism are prepared to renounce the past of our country in a way no slandering democrat would even dream of: our workers have been alienated from the means of production, they say, our planning is no good, and, in general, we are in bad mess. What we had before was not true.

What are we going to have now? Surely something truly scientific.

This will go on until a new socialist prophet comes, pronounces all that exists non-existent, renounces all that has been done before him, and calls for building true socialism. And so on, and so forth, ad infinitum.

Marx remarked in *Das Kapital*, just in passing, that a carriage cannot be gilded before it is made. What is going on now amounts to gilding the carriage of socialism before it is built. The world is having a hard time, the world is suffering from wars, poverty, unemployment and oppression. People are beset with troubles. But this is a real world which is fighting against its tragedies. This real world is being compared by the theoreticians of socialism not with our real world, but with a "true" world, i.e., a sham world, and we are being called upon, once again, to lay down our lives for these illusions.

Can our people be very well accused of negligence? Of indifference to the socialist idea? No, they cannot. For nearly a century, they have been exerting a sacrificial all-out effort to build socialism – and what can they show for their pains and for their enormous, often superhuman sacrifices now? If such a patient and hard-working nation, such a great nation as ours has failed to build socialism over so long a period, then which nation can succeed in that?

Who has proved that socialism has no future? Ivan Polozkov has, in the article entitled "For the Socialist Character of Perestroika" (see the *Kommunist* magazine, No. 2, 1991). While calling for the renovation of socialism and pronouncing almost all of our past to be untrue, he does not indicate any true ways of stimulating our society's growth and renovation. We never learn from the article what true course is open to us, if any. Polozkov leaves us no hope. What he offers us is not a new road, but an old trail. Nothing new seems to lie ahead for us, except, perhaps, new sacrifices.

Let's get down to work, comrades. That has been a respite, not really perestroika. From now on we shall be busy building Socialism No. 2.

A charming woman, just a passerby interviewed by a TV reporter at random, said softly: "Why doesn't anyone take pity on us?"

Simon Soloveichik

"Yes" or "No"

As the referendum on the treaty of Union draws near, the following questions arise more and more sharply: Can one reply simply "yes" or "no" to the cunning wording of its subject? How will the results of voting be used? By whom and for what purpose?

Alexander Didusenko

Only a few days remain before the referendum which is to determine the fate of the Union. It is already clear, however, that it will not be a country-wide plebiscite. Several constituent republics have declared they will not have any part in it. Other republics are going to hold simultaneously their own opinion polls. A number of republics have already held their own plebiscites. They do not conceal that even an overhauled Union does not suit them.

Why? and other questions

In an attempt to save the situation the Soviet Parliament passed a decision which says in particular that the decisions of republican authorities refusing to take part in the referendum are unlawful and are not to be carried out. In these republics local Soviets have been allowed to form district commissions for holding the referendum. The same right has been granted to work collectives and public organizations of enterprises. So the referendum will be conducted in all the republics, will it not?

I began my journalistic career in a small newspaper. One of its staff members could cast doubt on any unconsidered decision by simple questions – why, how, what will be the result? For instance, the newspaper gets an instruction to publish the election speech of a national leader in full. The staff member asks naively: Why publish it? The speech will take up three issues of our newspapers, and when they come out they will be read by everyone in Pravda.

At that time it was risky to ask questions like this, and only the professional decency of colleagues saved the staff member concerned from undesirable consequences. Today one can ask such questions without fear. It is therefore surprising and regrettable that our legislators do not consider it necessary to ask: Why, how and what will be the result?

Indeed, why is it so – the plebiscite held in Lithuania or Estonia is unlawful while the opinion poll conducted only in the city Sillamae is lawful. Is it reasonable to counterpose local authorities to republican ones? Is it possible to act in this way – incite local authorities to disobey republican bodies and expect that republics will submit to the central government.

How can the Soviet Parliament's decision on preparations for the referendum be tied with its previous law on national voting (referendum is the USSR)? For under the law neither work collectives nor public organizations have the right to form district commissions. Let's imagine even theoretically what will happen at a large enterprise if committees are set up by its work collective and the local branch of the Communist Party or any other public organization.

What will be the result? This is of course difficult to predict in detail. But one thing is clear. The political situation in the country will further deteriorate. The notorious war of republican and Union laws will be aggravated by contradictions between Union laws. One can imagine what conflicts and passions this discord will stir up.

The feeling of bitterness and disappointment is therefore growing among the people. What kind of parliamentarians do we have? Do they not understand that with their help the democratically elected parliament is turning into a voting machine which approves the unconsidered decisions prepared by the apparatus.

For the sake of a political mandate?

Or perhaps they understand all this very well. Perhaps they understand that only the success of the referendum held by every possible means will give them a political mandate for the maintenance (though in a slightly reformed way) of the existing political system and their own place in it.

This is evident from the very wording of the question put before the voters: Do you want to see the Union of Soviet Republics as a renovated federation of sovereign republics enjoying equal rights?

The question is often and justly called incorrect because it contains not one but three traps for respondents. Indeed, who is against a union of sovereign republics? I am all for it. The economic, cultural and human ties between the republics have shaped for decades and even centuries. To break these ties is like cutting a live body. But saying "yes" to the Union I can overlook words of seemingly minor importance – "renovated," "Soviet" and "socialist".

The word "renovation" can have various meanings. The "Soviet structure of power, which combines legislative, executive and judicial functions, has cost us an outrageous price. The Soviets, formerly considered the "driving belt" of society, have revealed their complete ineffectiveness. Is it possible to describe as "socialist" a country with a chronically sick economy, a population enslaved by the passport system and labour legislation, with shortages of food, clothing, housing, schools, hospitals, roads and, besides, torn by ethnic conflicts? Even an anti-communist would not think so.

Moreover, there are republics which will take part in the referendum, but no longer officially consider themselves socialist. So, on the one hand, people favour the Union. On the other hand, they have doubts about the nature of the Union if it is "renovated" by men like premier Pavlov, who lied more than once, and with the help of combined army and police patrols. It is difficult to expect that people will believe "renovators" of this kind.

Doubts are not removed by "letters of work collectives" backing the idea of a "renovated Union." Such a serious question cannot be decided by emotions. If legislators want citizens to take part in the referendum consciously and with a sense of responsibility they should have clearly defined what the word "renovated" means, that is, they should have published at least the draft treaty of Union. Furthermore, it should be made clear who will renovate the Union and how. Lastly, it is necessary to explain

Drawing from The Times (Britain)

officially how the results of the referendum will be counted.

It was stated that "the results of voting will be counted for the USSR as a whole, taking into account the results of voting in each republic separately." It is possible that the results of voting in, say, the Russian Federation will be used to conceal the results of the referendum in another republic. The legislators did not give an explanation for this. What is the reason? They could not or did not want to. Why then did we elect them?

Concerning lies in policy and the policy of lies

It is said that one cannot lie only in love and science. One can only be mistaken in the search of truth. It is also said that to lie in politics is inevitable. However, even in politics the quantity inevitably changes into quality. Lies in policy turn into the policy of lies, and a politician falls into a trap of his own unredeemed promises, ambiguous statements and tricky manoeuvres. It is even difficult to count how many sins of this kind our politicians have made in the years of perestroika.

We have been deceived by talk about acceleration, the benefit of the anti-drinking campaign, the growth of prices, and the exchange of banknotes. The authorities have tried hard to hush up or at least to belittle the Chernobyl tragedy. They have deceived us by a programme of housing construction envisaging a separate flat for each family by the year 2000. They have avoided the responsibility for the use of troops in attempts to solve the nationalities problem. In many democratic countries even one step of this kind could lead to the resignation of the government and an early parliamentary election. We have spared our politicians, possibly because the failures in domestic policy have been obscured by indisputable achievements in our foreign policy. A great deal has been done – the ending of the cold war, initial steps towards disarmament, new political thinking.

The situation is changing now. The time limit during which the voters were prepared to listen to fine promises seems to have been exhausted. The naive expectations of a miracle, the golden age of freedom and prosperity after the destruction of the stagnant political system have evaporated when they clashed with the harsh realities of everday life. Moreover, the system has proved more tenacious of life than some people thought before. Nationalism, populism, racism, authoritarian and dictatorial tendencies, territorial claims are "demons of the past epochs" which, as Polish publicist Adam Michnik aptly put it, are emerging from the "large black hole" left by the former totalitarian regime. In many republics – constituent and autonomous – the struggle for power between the new ethnocracy and the party bureaucracy which has recovered from the shock of perestroika is assuming more fierce and even bloody forms. The army and law-enforcement bodies are increasingly coming involved in domestic politics.

True, we still believe and are trying to believe that these phenomena are hangovers of the past, for new politicians were brought up in the old spirit and are simply unable to behave otherwise. But the alarm is growing.

The alarm is growing also because miscalculations at home create problems for the Soviet Union in world politics. The favourable image of the Soviet state during the past few years is evaporating while the prestige of Mikhail Gorbachev, whose name at home and abroad is linked with hopes for the success of perestroika, is being undermined by numerous decrees, which are not carried out, contradictory statements, unconvincing justifications and obvious concessions to the conservative forces. Now that the political barometer indicates a storm any imprudent step, any unconsidered word or action becomes dangerous, especially in connection with such an important event as the March 17 referendum on the future of the Union.

I favour the preservation of the Union. Nevertheless, one thing worries me. Regardless of its results, the referendum could give scope to political adventurers and tricksters of every kind capable of using the ambiguity of statements, the miscalculations of leaders, the disappointment of the people, the discontent of the military, and the acuteness of ethnic and social problems in order to change the course of development, explode the positive achievements of the last few years, and throw the country back to the Brezhnev, Stalin or even tsarist era. I am afraid that the Soviet Union, and the rest of the world too, will be unable to withstand such an explosion.

The danger should not be exaggerated, but it should not be belittled either. In any case, it is quite real if we remember that the referendum will be held in the atmosphere of public discord aggravated by contradictory laws. This opens the door to the appearance of new, self-styled structures opposed to legal local and republican authorities.

A few days remain before the referendum and the time when mistakes could be made has run out. The limit of confidence in politicians has virtually been exhausted. This refers both to politicians in office and in the opposition, on the right or the left flank. Any mistake can become the last today.

From Tbilisi to Tskhinvali via Moscow

Will the situation in South Ossetia improve on the eve of the all-Union referendum on the new Union Treaty and the republican referendum on independence of Georgia?

Marina Shakina

Zviad Gamsakhurdia has declared a preparedness to start negotiating with representatives of South Ossetia on one condition: the activities of Ossetian fighters must be halted and complete security restored in the areas where a state of emergency has been declared. It had taken the Georgian leadership less than three months, months of terror, blockade, arsenies and hostage-taking, to realize that the conflict needed a political, not a military, solution.

The "indigenous population" must prevail

How will the situation around Tskhinvali evolve? Besides Georgia and South Ossetia, other characters may enter the drama: Russia and the Kremlin. Today the Kremlin's presence in Tskhinvali has the traditional form of presidential decrees and the deployment of interior troops instructed not to get involved in inter-ethnic strife. The troops have been there since the first unrest in Tsikhinvali which followed South Ossetia's (then an autonomous region) unilateral declaration of itself as an autonomous republic within Georgia. The Supreme Soviet of Georgia vetoed the decision as illegal.

Georgia is a far cry from the moderate Baltics where the Kremlin acts much more resolutely. A January 13 in Tbilisi would not have ended as easily as it did in Vilnius. Today Transcaucasia as a huge underground arsenal and Georgia will not put up with another April 9. The problem of South Ossetia will require much patience and political art which the Kremlin seems to lack dramatically.

Besides this, there are strong suspicions that the Kremlin is aggravating the problem and playing the Ossetian card in order to keep Georgia in the Union. Regrettably, the news about the recent Gorbachev–Gamsakhurdia hot-line talk has not dispelled these suspicions.

Russia is also involved. The Ossetians are one of the peoples living in Russia and the involvement in the Ossetians' fate in Georgia comes naturally for Russia. This dimension offers ways of possible understanding. If the communication via the Kremlin is replaced with a bilateral Russian-Georgian dialogue, taking into account all interests, there may be ways to stabilize the situation in South Ossetia. The month of March this year will see a series of events which will make a dialogue between Russia and Georgia and Georgia and the Kremlin an imperative. March 17 is the date of the all-Union referendum on the new Union Treaty in which Georgia has refused to take part (it remains to be seen how autonomous republics will react to this refusal); March 31 is the date of Georgia's own referendum on independence (if the situation of Southern Ossetia does not improve by then, Abkhazians, Russians, Ossetians and Azerbaijanians living in Georgia will hardly say "yes" to independence). Besides this, there are voices in South Ossetia demanding that a Moscow-supervised state of emergency be declared in all of South Ossetia, and Moscow is obviously lending a benevolent ear to these calls. At present, a state of emergency is in force only in the capital city of Tskhinvali and the Dzhava district, and this state of emergency is sponsored by the **Georgian parliament.**

Zviad Gamsakhurdia's generous interviews and speeches provide no signs that any change of attitude to the reasons and uncivilized ways to resolve the concflict may be forthcoming. Gamsakhurdia's utterings, as well as statements of the Georgian representative in Moscow and the Georgian intellectuals' appeals to President Gorbachev leave no doubt that for Tbilisi the restoration of the South Ossetian Autonomous region is out of the question. No political, religious or intellectual leader of Georgia has condemned or

Armed civilians: a usual sight in Transcaucasia

Photo by Valery Nistratov

spoken up against what is now going on in Southern Ossetia (not the killings of **Georgians,** but the death and sufferings of old men, women and children regardless of their ethnic origin), or criticized the food and power-supply blockade of Tsikhinvali. In a sense, politicians and intellectuals have distanced themselves from the violence when they labelled it "spontaneous popular unrest," not a calculated strategy. However, nothing more has been done.

Naturally, most Georgians approve of the Georgian parliament's December 11 decision on the dissolution of the Southern Ossetian Autonomous Region and the State of Emergency Law promptly enacted on that very day. This support is the only thing that matters now for Gamsakhurdia. He does not seem to be concerned about what Moscow, the neighbouring republics or the West may think about it. When asked by a *Stampa* interviewer to define his attitude vis-à-vis the ethnic minorities living in Georgia, Gamsakhurdía said: "My attitude is simple: the indigenous population must prevail over all other ethnic groups." This obscure formula (it is difficult to define what exactly the term "indigenous population" means and the word "prevail" allows various interpretations as well), is, however, clear enough. One cannot help but admire Zviad: is there any politicians in Europe or elsewhere who could be so bold as to advertise such a creed? Had the Russian leader, Yeltsin, said anything of the kind, the scale of the resulting scandal would have been difficult to imagine.

Journalists non grata

Georgia is going to break away from the USSR and join the international family of independent states. As far as I know, the international community feels sour about politicians advocating "prevalence of the indeginous population." When he came to Moscow once again, one high-ranking bureaucrat from the current Georgian government complained that the media image of the new Georgian rulers was that of savages, while the attitude to the Baltics was much better. Decisions and measures of the parliaments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have been repeatedly criticized in Moscow – both by official quarters and pro-democracy forces. However, no Baltic politician has ever said that the indigenous population must prevail.

In another declaration Zviad Gamsakhurdia said: "We are against uncontrolled migration of Georgians to other regions. We will put an end to it, no matter what the cost. We will try hard to halt the migration, because it endangers the very existence of our nation." This is a logical continuation of the principle that the indigenous nation should prevail: representatives of this indigenous nation are refused freedom of travel... which is a violation of all international human rights covenants.

Recently, there has been one more statement: if the Tbilisi correspondents of *Komsomolskaya Pravda, Moscow News* and some other Moscow-based media continue to publish about Southern Ossetia what Zviad Gamsakhurdia would not like to hear, they may be declared non grata and expelled from Georgia. This is to illustrate the Georgian leadership's attitude to the freedom of information exchange.

Separatists against fighters

One of the traditional accusations levelled by Tbilisi at Moscow is that of the Moscow-based media's pro-Ossetian slant. Tbilisi claims these media provide a biased coverage of events, ignoring the sufferings of Georgians who used to live in and were expelled from Tskhinvali and the Dzhava district. On the other hand, the Kremlin believes that the pro-democracy press does not treat the Southern Ossetian problem seriously enough, fearing that it may damage the reputation of Gamsakhurdia who is counted among the democrats. In actuality, the press prefers hard facts to emotional comments: how many people were arrested and of what ethnic origin, how many houses set afire, how many guns were confiscated. Naturally, an extensive coverage is also given to the blockade of Tskhinvali. Many people have formed an impression that the unrest started when the Supreme Soviet of Georgia abolished the Southern Ossetian Autonomous Region. The last act of the drama became the first one for many readers. The history of the region, the history of the Georgians' aattitude towards it and last year's political history remain unknown to most people: hard facts are replaced with highly emotional reports from the conflict area. With the situation continually being aggravated going beyond all the civilized confines and approaching a state of an all-out war (blockade, hunger, freezing cold, lack of medicines plus everyday fighting), it is not surprising that Southern Ossetia looks like the suffering party – the Georgian lawmakers themselves made the Ossetians look like martyrs in the eyes of the whole world.

Tbilisi speaks about "separatist bandits," Tskhinvali – about Georgian fighters and National Guardsmen. Arsenies, terror, killings, hostage-taking, thefts of weapons, forced resettlement of people from their native villages – all these are parts of a bilateral mutual process. The losses are approximately equal both on the Georgian and the Ossetian sides. Refugees flood Tbilisi as well as Vladikavkaz, the capital city of Northern Ossetia, belonging to the Russian Federation, and the refugees' stories are equally terrible. Today, the conflicting sides are more embittered and consolidated than they had been before December 11. The law on the abolition of the Southern Ossetian Autonomous Region has not helped to solve any problem, and evidently, was nothing but moral gratification for the Supreme Soviet of Georgia.

Tbilisi and Tskhinvali are bogged down in fruitless legal discussions. Tbilisi: "The Southern Ossetian Autonomous Region extended its status to that of a republic within the Soviet Union, thus shedding its former status of an autonomous region. In other words, Southern Ossetia dissolved itself as an autonomous region and all we did was to define the situation in legal terms." Tskhinvali: "The supreme legislative body of Georgia recognized the Soviet Authorities and Constitution as illegal in the republic. Thus recognition makes the Supreme Soviet of Georgia and its Presidium themselves illegal institutions." Naturally, both Georgia and Southern Ossetia refer to the nations' right to self-determination.

The right to self-determination must be respected, but one has to note that nowhere in the world this right is interpreted as the right of a part of some state's population to break away from that state taking along with it some of that state's land. In this country, the right to self-determination and secession from the Union is a constitutional provision but it has never been treated seriously. It was like a game: each of the 15 Union republics pretended it had the right to secede from the USSR. The fact that today some republics are quite serious in their desire to secede does not change anything: for 73 years of the Soviet power the Soviet Union has been a unitary state which pretended to be a union of sovereign republics.

Soviet republics have never been states – there are many confirmations of this fact, starting with their doubtful legal status and to their obscure borders. From this viewpoint, Georgia, which wants to cede from the USSR, and Southern Ossetia, which wants to cede from Georgia, are in similar situations. They both remain parts of a unitary state whose structure has weakened in recent years. To transform these structures from unitary to democratic is too complicated a task to be solved by simply going back to a certain year in history. In 1921 the Ossetians might have been prepared to live in the democratic Georgian republic. In 1991, they are not. Is there any way to solve this contradiction? The impression that the pie is already divided and can be separated easily, is a false one. Recent years' events, bloody ethnic conflicts demonstrate that it is impossible to divide a multinational state, all the more so as influential forces in Moscow want to preserve the Union at any cost.

Divorcing the Kremlin after forced marriage

Report from our special correspondents touring the Baltics

Major-General Algimantas Naudžiunas, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania (CPSU), used to serve as the political commissar of a military unit at the Baikonur Space Centre. A few months ago he was reassigned to Vilnius to "struggle against Lithuanian nationalists." After some lamentation that Soviet rule had not been restored in Vilnius, Gen. Naudžiunas exclaimed bitterly: "We can't even stage a decent coup in this country!" We glanced at the general's wristwatch and saw that the dial showed Moscow time.

As for the rest of Lithuania, it lives according to local time. The most demonstrative proof of the Lithuanian resolve for independence is the results of the February 9 opinion poll; it was predated by a war of posters, slogans and leaflets which swept the whole republic. The Lithuanian Parliament's leaflets printed in several languages were calling on inhabitants to vote against "the old Soviet dictatorship" and for "an independent and democratic Lithuania." The pro-Communist Interdvizheniye (Internationalist Movement) issued its own leaflets, in Russian, which were then shoved into mailboxes. Interdvizheniye leaflets demanded that people boycott the poll. Why was Interdvizheniye so opposed to voting? In case Lithuania opts for independence, Interdvizheniye leaders insist, "bankrupt politicians" will steer the Lithuanian nation "towards new slavery under the yoke of the merciless proponents of capitalism."

We spent Saturday, February 9 at Polling Station 158 at Vilnius' Strazdelio Street. Chairman of the poll commission, Antanas Šackus, member of no party or movement, showed us three ballots written in Lithuanian, Russian and Polish. Foreign observers were also there supervising the voting procedure.

The results of the poll are well known: more than 90 percent of the people voted for an independent and democratic Lithuania. Late at night thousands of people gathered outside the Parliament in the Independence Square chanted "Lietuva! Lietuva!" ("Lithuania! Lithuania!") Vytautas Landsbergis, Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian Republic, addressed the rally through a loudspeaker saying: "We have held a plebiscite – the expression of popular will. Its results are the supreme law and no one can question or alter the will of the people."

> The republic is voting for independence, but will that convince Moscow?

The shattering success would have hardly been possible had it not been for the tragic events in Vilnius of January 11 to 13, this year. Moscow has suffered a double fiasco in Lithuania: it failed to restore Soviet rule in the republic with the help of troops and thus promoted Landsbergis' landslide victory. The Kremlin refused to recognize the results of the Lithuanian poll and called them "juridically untenable."

What about the all-Union referendum scheduled for March 17? The Kremlin insists it is still necessary. Vilnius does not object, but puts forward one condition: "the Soviet Union must address Lithuania and ask the Lithuanian government to permit Soviet citizens based in Lithuania to express their opinion about the future of their country." On the whole, though, citizens of Lithuania have no business to participate in the all-Union referendum, Landsbergis said.

These problems might have been settled had the sides met at the bargaining table instead of showering aggressive telegrams on each other. However, Vilnius and Moscow cannot even agree on purely procedural matters. Lithuania is prepared to enter into talks with the USSR on the following conditions: the Soviet Union must return to the republic the buildings its troops seized during the January 11-13 events, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR "condemns the use of Soviet armed forces in Vilnius as illegal" and withdraws the "repressive" troops and the KGB contingent from Lithuania. In addition, Vilnius wants Moscow to offer guarantees of Lithuanian independence "by providing a legal act to this effect." If these conditions are met by Moscow, Premier Vagnoris of Lithuania believes, "even the most formidable problems will be solved." There are signs, however, that Moscow will not agree to what Vilnius demands and Vilnius, in its turn, will not make any concessions. The antagonism has gone so far that a third party – Iceland – has volunteered to act as mediator between representatives of a still integrated Soviet Union.

The situation that has taken shape in Lithuania after January 13 and the independence referendum has finally convinced Landsbergis' radically-minded supporters that their course was right and that Moscow understood no language except that of ultimatums. At the same time, this irreconcilable stance has split Lithuania's pro-democracy camp. Former Deputy Premier, leader of the Democratic Labour Party of Lithuania Algirdas Brazauskas has resolutely joined the opposition. He sees the Lithuanian progress towards independence as "a gradual advance, which takes into account all realities, including Lithuania's many years as part of the USSR." Immediately after she returned to Lithuania from her foreign tour, Kazimiera Prunskiene, the former prime minister of Lithuania, declared that she intended to set up an opposition party which would "establish cooperation with pro-democracy forces in the USSR, including the new Foreign Policy Association headed by Eduard Shevardnadze.

Even children are now involved in politics. The concrete barricades aroud the parliament building – the ultimate symbol of Lithuanian rebelliousness, rather than a fortification of any military value – are covered with children's cartoons and drawings making fun of the Soviet leaders. After watching Mickey Mouse cartoons, Dominikas, our friends' son, habitually switches off the TV set. A child of seven, he knows what will come next: Edmundas Kasparavičius will appear on the screen, the only Lithuanian "newscaster" left at the Vilnius TV centre after it had been seized by Soviet paratroopers. Lithuanians call the Vilnius TV "Kasparvision." Edmundas Kas-

Children's drawings on barbed wire outside the parliament building

paravicius is a colonel, a Sinologist by education who fought in Afghanistan. He was the only Lithuanian to agree to participate in the broadcasts. Skirmantas Valiulis, Director General of the Lithuanian TV and Radio, told us there had been no quislings among TV workers: no one of them agreed to work for "Kasparvision" refusing fat salary extensions. Lithuanians are watching TV broadcasts from Kaunas where the paratroopers had not seized the TV centre.

What will come next? Says Professor Kestutis Glaveckas, 41, Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of Lithuania: "If the Soviet Union were a country with a free market and an open economy, no republic would want to secede from such a union. Now the republics are fleeing from totalitarianism and Stalinist socialism." The Lithuanian economist who is fresh from a US academic trip, believes the Lithuanian economy can only be restored on the basis of "shock therapy," something like the local version of Poland's Balcerowicz Plan. When asked about what Vilnius' relations with Moscow would be like, Prof. Glaveckas said there would be no more tanks, and the Kremlin would resort to the time-tested tactic of economic strangulation.

These gloomy prospects do not seem to scare the Chairman of the Lithuanian Parliament. Vytautas Landsbergis follows the path of East European countries which have broken free from the Kremlin's grip. The only picture decorating Landsbergis office is a portrait of Vaclav Havel. A teacher of music until recently, and a lover of Chopin, Landsbergis pins hopes on the international community. He believes that Lithuania – an independent state and formerly a full-fledged League of Nations member – would be assisted and supported by the West. So far, the West is in no hurry to give a helping hand.

In any case, the popularity rating of the Lithuanian leader, which had sunk somewhat several months ago, is high again. After the January tragedy no one but the local Communists dared to criticize Landsbergis. Vitas Tomkus, People's Deputy of the USSR and Editor-in-Chief of the newspaper *Respublika* thus explains this phenomenon: "Landsbergis has become the symbol of Lithuanian independence. There is much in him that I do not like. He has a dictatorial slant. He does not like the independent press. He has been head of parliament for only a year, but he has already published a volume of his speeches and reports. What if he stays in power for thirty more years?... The main thing is different, however. For the sake of complete independence we the democrats must pretend we do not notice these features in Landsbergis..."

The local Communists, though, do not seem to agree. Their life is really sour today. General Naudžiunas complained he had no service limousine, or flat or even ration cards without which one cannot buy any food in Lithuania; he also showed us a notice summoning him to court. The Procurator-General of the Lithuanian Republic initiated criminal proceedings against Naudžiunas and other CPL leaders charging them with "...public calls for violation of the sovereignty of the Lithuanian state..." Communist Party bigshots are also accused of having taken part in the illegal National Salvation Committee. The legitimate authorities of the Lithuanian republic have every justification for charging the CPL: Juozas Jermalavicius, the member of the CPL Central Committee who has announced the formation of the National Salvation Committee has openly admitted he phoned the political commissar of the Vilnius garrison and asked the latter "to step in and help the working people to take over the TV Centre."

There is more evidence: the statements and declarations allegedly issued by the mythical committee were actually printed at the CPL Central Committee, circulated by the CPL CC public relations department and published in the CPL flagship newspaper *Litva Sovietskaya*.

While Communist bosses face trial in Vilnius, in more remote towns it sometimes comes to beatings. Secretary of the CPL organization at the town of Utena, Vladimir X (he refused to be identified, because he said he feared persecution) complained that Communists were witchhunted in the district. He lamented massive defection from the CPL ranks. Before January 13, his organization numbered 3,300 members; now there are only 23. "They threaten us all the time: 'Turn in your Party card, otherwise we'll kill you all'" Vladimir told us. It was with a feeling of compassion that we listened to the party secretary's testimony, all the more so as he told us that Sajudis followers were busy forming Committees of National Vengeance... No trace of such a committee was found in the Utena district actually, and it seemed to us that Communists were inventing enemies to fuel their resolve.

Meanwhile, the Vilnius-based CPL leaders are fit and ready for new battles against the "nationalists." "I do not oppose Lithuanian independence," said General Naudžiunas, "but Lithuania must stay in the USSR. A great power simply cannot be allowed to split up into banana republics.

What about the debts of the USSR? We have all borrowed heavily from the West and now the Russians, the Ukrainians and the Byelorussians may be left alone to repay those debts. I agree, Lithuania's marriage to the USSR was a forced one, but after so many years of cohabitation, one wants a dignified and civilized divorce... After five years of perestroika, Lithuania has become the testing ground where those willing to destroy the USSR test their tactics. The enemies of socialism are using so-called democrats, who crave for restoration of the bourgeois order, similar to that which existed under Smetona."

We heard many similar words from a number of Communists across the Baltics. Unlike those Communists, though, the general was militarily brief and precise when he explained his plan to solve the crisis in Lithuania. **Here is what the general suggested for the sake of Lithuania's national salvation:**

"Direct presidential rule in Lithuania. Dissolution of all parallel bodies of power. Setting up of a coalition government, uniting patriotically-minded republican politicians. New direct elections to the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic after the situation has been brought back to normal."

When we said good-bye, the general, who might have been the right man for his former job at Baikonur, sighed: "Actually I miss Andropov: there was justice and order under him..."

Just as in the other Baltic republics, Lithuanian Communists like to speak at length about the separatist attitudes of the local authorities, meaning the latter's determination to break free from the Kremlin. At the same time, they are trying to play the Russian and Polish trump cards. The ethnic Poles' just demands for an autonomy within the Lithuanian republic are being transformed into an idea of setting up an independent, Polish-dominated Vilnius Region outside Lithuania.

At a meeting with Lithuanian Communist Party activists, Politburo member Oleg Shenin spoke about the "Russian question." He stressed that the thesis that "Klaipeda is a Slavic land from time immemorial" had been acknowledged by the 1943 Teheran Conference. Another Politburo member, Moscow's Party boss Yuri Prokofiyev believes the Kremlin must recognize, "in accordance with the Lithuanians' demand," the Lithuania's inclusion into the USSR as an act of annexation and agree to the republic's independence, but within the boundaries of 1939.

"What is happening now in Lithuania is a disgrace," said the Russian Orthodox Archbishop Chrysostom of Vilnius and all Lithuania. "There is a chaos in the republic and the whole Union. The situation might be described by the quotation: 'Those whom God wishes to destroy, God first makes mad.' Today the Lord took away the reason of many powerful politicians."

Yakov Borovoi,

Alexander Chudodeyev

Command system vs. free market

Our controversial economic reform has given rise to a host of myths – about the omnipotence of the mafia, the predatory schemes of foreign big business, the ruinous consequences of privatization... What is the truth of the matter?

PAVEL BUNICH, President of the Leaseholders' and Entrepreneurs' Union, People's Deputy of the USSR, interviewed by a *New Times* correspondent

New Times. They say that the command-administrative system has been demolished, but the free market system hasn't emerged yet – hence all our economic troubles. Do you agree with this?

Pavel Bunich. It is true that the free market is still in its formative stage here, but as for the command-administrative system, it hasn't been demolished at all. Ninety percent of the country's economy remains state-owned, ministries still remain in almost full control and run their respective industries through government-appointed directors. The government seeks to preserve old economic ties based on anti-market principles and to retain the centralized pricing system.

The command system has become decrepit, its muscles have become flabby because the fear it used to depend on for its functioning is gone. What we have now is the command system minus fear. Consequently, it does not work.

NT. Some economists are of the opinion that high-placed Party and government bureaucrats will stop resisting the establishment of free market relations as soon as they assume the management of concerns, joint-stock companies and joint enterprises...

P.B. I have the impression that most of these bureaucrats will never succeed in adapting themselves to the market system. However, the best of them (who are in the minority, I'm sorry to say) will certainly prove useful. In general, it is about time the strong public prejudice against the members of the upper crust, all of whom are popularly believed to be good for nothing, is dropped.

In the CPSU Central Committee, the Council of Ministers and in the ministries there are people who possess a tremendous business potential. We – I mean the Leaseholders' and Entrepreneurs' Union and the Scientific and Industrial Union which I am also connected with – are ready to offer these people executive jobs.

NT. The opponents of privatization say that it will amount to selling the country out to shady operators, mafiosi and Western businessmen...

N.B. The Russian Federation's denationalization bill provides for various options. There is, for instance, the option of about 20 percent of state property being sold to the public at a thirty percent discount. The national bill provides for giving out up to thirty percent of state-owned property free of charge.

As I see it, a substantial proportion of state property should be distributed among the working people free as shares or sold at reduced prices. The resolution adopted by the Fourth Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR late last year on the President's report about the situation in the country said explicitly that a certain proportion of state property should be distributed among the working people. Distributed, mind you, not leased out or sold!

As to selling, state property is to be sold either to the workers of the given enterprise only, or to all those who can afford it. How can prevent the underworld from buying up these enterprises? We shall ask buyers to declare their profits – no one has thought up a better method so far.

Foreigners are supposed to prove that they have acquired Soviet currency by legal means (if the purchase of stock for rubles is in question). Is there any reason to be afraid that foreigners will "buy up everything"?

So far, Western capital is not coming our way. Out of 3,000 registered joint ventures, only about 400 are operational, almost all of them miniscule.

More than 60 percent of their aggregate capital is Soviet. Therefore, the assertion that Western capital is waiting for a chance to take over our industrial plants – most of them obsolete or downright antediluvian – is ungrounded, to put it mildly.

NT. Nevertheless, some Soviet mass media warn us that unless we watch out, ruthless capitalists will buy up our industrial plants and start exploiting and heavily underpaying our workers whom they regard as no better than the cheap unskilled labour found in developing African countries...

P.B. For our workers, even the African wage level remains unattainable. The average African worker earns 100 dollars a month – i.e., at a commercial rate, two or three thousand rubles as against our worker's average 300 rubles. The term "labour hiring" is by no means synonymous with "labour exploitation." They may coincide, but the difference between them is becoming ever more essential. If a Marshal, for instance, is kept by a platoon of private soldiers, that would be exploitation considering the enormous salary he receives. But if the Marshal is in command of an army, the army needs him as much as he needs it. You can't equate "labour hiring" and "labour exploitation." A manager is not necessarily an exploiter.

Rather on the contrary. The "foreign exploitation" myth is demagogy aimed at impeding the development of free market relations. It has come to my knowledge that in some parts of Russia this kind of propaganda is carried on by secretaries of local Party committees. In particular, they are trying to talk peasants into opposing the introduction of private land ownership which, they say, will bring in businessmen from the southern republics who will "buy everything up and make farm labourers out of you."

NT. These sentiments are rather widespread. Can they interfere with our efforts towards creating a free-market economy?

P.B. Look at the way the cooperative movement is developing. No one needs to be forced into a cooperative or urged on. It is true, of course, that not all the cooperatives are above board. But this should not overshadow the important fact that the entrepreneurial spirit has survived in our country over 70 years of totalitarian rule. Most of our people are ambitious and have good sense.

And take the practice of workers taking their industrial plants on lease. Unlike the state-run ones, these enterprises increased their output by four percent a year, although they are worse off than the rest in terms of raw materials and feedstock. The thing is that having taken a factory on lease, its workers become their own masters to a certain extent and know that their earnings depend directly on their own efficiency.

The notion of free enterprise should be extended finally to the work of state-run plants. France's Renault and Finland's Nokia, for instance, are state enterprises, but function in exactly the same way as market-oriented structures do.

In the West, even munition plants are motivated by profit, i.e., constitute a natural element of the market system.

NT. Pavlov suggested price reform. What's your opinion of the government programme?

P.B. Without a free price mechanism the market model does not work. Had the prices been "set freely" in, say, 1986, inflation would have been quite moderate today, and our shops would have been as well stocked as those of Western countries (though with poorer quality goods). We would even have had what economists call "normal overproduction." Nothing of the kind has happened, however. Free prices were feared like death here...

Drawing by Victor Bogorad

As a result, the economic and pricing reforms are marking time, the supply of consumer goods kept running low, and the prices continue their upward climb. Restraining prices of state-controlled goods is termed by economists "suppressed inflation." Last year, the rate of inflation ("suppressed" inflation included) amounted to 21 percent – at an official and, most probably, conservative estimate.

Considering the present situation in the country, the authors of the 500 Days programme gave top priority not to a price increases but to the so-called "money extraction" within a short period – about half a year. They provided for a rise in bank interest rates (to twenty percent) in order to encourage people to keep their money in banks. The practice of bying consumer durables on an instalment plan was to have been extended. Other measures included putting land plots and apartments on sale, a determined but clever conversion of munition plants to civilian production.

The government, however, decided to eliminate the "discrepancy" between pressing demand and inadequate supply in the consumer market by raising prices. This is a bumpier road to the free price system. The only justification for the Pavlov plan can be that there is simply no time left for a smooth money extraction.

NT. The republics and the central government cannot come to terms on the size of compensation. What's your stand on the issue?

P.B. The outcome of the reform depends on whether the compensation problem is solved. If wholesale prices are set free, i.e., if we leave it to the market to set them, then the problem of compensating the working class for price rises will resolve itself automatically – the workers will raise their own wages through a rise in wholesale prices. True, this will take the removal of numerous fetters still binding our industrial plants hand and foot. In order to solve the compensation problem, wholesale prices should be made as free as retail ones.

For those employed in non-productive spheres, compensations should be financed from the Union and republics' budgets. In my opinion, the central government is quite right in presuming that the minimum margin of compensation should be uniform for all the republics and regions.

Interviewer: Evgeny Verlin

Evil breeds evil

Concerning the feeling of dignity in political struggle

Whether it is bad or not, the night programme of Soviet television extensively showed a rally held in Moscow on February 23 on the occasion of Soviet Army Day and the cameramen concealed from the viewers while journalists noticed one of the most interesting posters. It was a large photograph of Academician Alexander Yakovlev, member of the Presidential Council, turned into a target with the caption promising no miss. It should be said that the life of Yakovlev was already put in danger almost 50 years ago, on the front-line from which he returned home seriously wounded.

Political life in the country is assuming a militarized character, and political struggle is developing into war. The main task is to discover the enemy and then unmask and destroy him. All methods are good in this war.

For instance, the newspaper *Sovetskaya Rossiya* wants to defend Ivan Polozkov (first secretary of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation), and one can well understand this desire. But how was this done? In reply to an article in the magazine *Ogonyok,* which describes the doings of party leaders in the Kursk region, where Polozkov began his career, *Sovetskaya Rossiya* attacked Yuri Chernichenko, a writer and deputy, for some reason. "Not without his (Chernichenko's) help the first secretary of the Gribanovo district party committee, Kharlamov, became a drunkard and died of alcoholism," the newspaper wrote. What does Chernichenko have to do with this? The point is that he is a member of the editorial board of the hated *Ogonyok.* The editors of *Sovetskaya Rossiya* evidently beleive that by writing about the drunkard-district party secretary they defended the Communist Party.

Or, for instance, *Sovetskaya Rossiya* has an itch to accuse democrats of hatching a coup, seizing power and changing the system. It carries a photograph allegedly showing the headquarters of the enemy forces. Well-known democrats, all in military uniform, seem to discuss the plan of operations. What kind of photograph was it? It turned out that it was a comic collage prepared for a party to mark the anniversary of the newspaper *Moscow News.* A *Moscow News* artist pasted the photographs of noted deputies on a reproduction of the famous picture "War council in Fili in 1812." It was an ordinary joke. But the editors of *Sovetskaya Rossiya* saw something ominous in it. In the heat of the war against democrats they seem to have lost the ability to understand humour.

Boris Yeltsin, chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation, speaking on television, publicly accused President Gorbachev of insincerity and called for his resignation. One could expect that a worthy reply would be given or Yeltsin would be challenged to a duel. Instead of this, deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR scolded him publicly, also on television, and declared him a criminal.

Unfortunately, one can often watch similar scenes in our political life. Suffice it to look through *Sovetskaya Rossiya, Domostroi, Glasnost* and even *Pravda.* Nor is the newspaper *Krasnaya Zvezda* scrupulous in this matter.

Perhaps any manifestation of wit and intellect in general is regarded as something alien. In any case, the rightist and pseudo-patriotic newspapers demonstrate hatred and disregard for the intellect. This explains why the photographs of brilliant minds, such as Yakovlev, Shevardnadze, are pasted on targets.

This hatred for the intellect comes not only from ignorance which was assiduously cultivated in the party and ideological sphere. The instinct of self-preservation makes itself felt here. The intellectual level of some people becomes clearly evident in comparison with the above-mentioned figures. The anti-intellectual sallies of conservatives are not surprising. They are charactiristic of conservatives and it runs in their blood.

Of course, this can be explained not only by traditional ignorance, though 100 years ago a Russian publicist ruefully wrote about the "power of darkness" in Russia. Russian playwrights and novelists wrote about the notions held by some sections of Russian society about the outside world. In the years of Soviet government the traditional ignorance, not dispelled by the elimination of illiteracy and even intensified by the country's isolation from the outside world, has spread on a wider scale.

Rudeness, ignorance, demagogy, intolerance, inefficiency and irresponsibility have taken deep root in the party, government and military apparatus. The damned bureaucracy from which the people suffered all the time constantly reproduced on an ever greater scale the negative features of the uneducated strata of Russian society.

The dignity of man suffered most of all. This applies both to the "cogwheels" of the apparatus and the victims of its exercises. The promotion along the hierarchic ladder usually made officials callous, inhuman and intolerant and, at last, they lost the feeling of their dignity. There were few exceptions, of course.

Unfortunately, most of our politicians underwent the harsh school of work in the apparatus and lost their qualities during their career. Hence shameless demagogy disguised by talk about the "interests of the state" and lack of attention to the suffering of other people. No wonder that high-placed officials, speaking before millions of people over radio or television, openly scoff at common sense.

One may ask how it is connected with politics. It has a direct relation to politics because many of the deputies, especially of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, and government officials, including ministers and media leaders, have come from the apparatus.

They have brought all the features shaped in the harsh apparatus struggle into a new atmosphere of policy, into glasnost and democracy. This does not only create an appropriate moral climate, though its influence is felt in practical deeds. It simply does not enable parliamentarians to do their work properly and impels them to squabbles which arouses the feeling of disgust among the people, apathy and lack of belief in the effectiveness of democracy, the desire to accuse not the past but the present of the ugly scenes shown on television or described in newspaper reports.

We shall never revive Russia or the Union, no matter what Draconian measures the government may take. The nation can be revived by those who have morally matured for this task, who can cope with it intellectually and morally. Otherwise a new variant of the Stalinist GULAG may appear if only the Union is not broken into pieces by those who loudly voice their concern over its fate.

Victor Kremenyuk,
professor
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"Auf wiedersehen" to two million?

The First Congress of Soviet Ethnic Germans: a provisional council of the republic or a government in exile?

For the departure from the Soviet Union of each Soviet citizen who has decided to take up his permanent residence abroad our country loses 40,000 rubles, according to estimates of the USSR State Planning Committee. Last year, 146,000 ethnic Germans emigrated from the USSR, leaving our half-fempty public purse minus 5.8 billion rubles. The departure of all the ethnic Germans would cost the USSR somewhere in the neighbourhood of 80 billion rubles.

Most of our Germans leave the Soviet Union for Germany, which also knows how to count its money. According to the Frankfurt-am-Main Institute of Economics, the entry of each Soviet ethnic German into Germany will add, in the long run, 42,000 Marks to the Federal budget; by the year 2000, the integration of all of them – two million altogether – into Germany will cause the national product to grow by an equivalent of 84 billion Marks.

The ruins of a Lutheran church in Saratov Region: will it be of use any more?
Photo by author

Many Soviet ethnic Germans do not want to emigrate, and have been trying for years to achieve political rehabilitation at home. They regard the continued public discussion of the expediency of restoring the German Republic on the Volga as "a case of cynical disregard for the fate of a whole people." This is all the more striking now that the USSR Supreme Soviet has officially condemned as criminal all repressive acts perpetrated at one time against whole peoples in this country.

On March 12, Soviet ethnic Germans will hold their first ever Congress at which they plan to assert their rights in a most emphatic manner. However, the Congress representing two million ethnic Germans will hardly achieve anything in a situation where even Congres of People's Deputies of the USSR demonstrates their importence.

The idea of holding the Congress popped up last summer and suggested by the CPSU Central Committee, was backed by the USSR Council of Ministers, specifically by the State Commission dealing with the problems of Soviet ethnic Germans. A veil was drawn over the Commission's activity for a year. The Congress is to set up a Soviet ethnic Germans' association having the status of a public organization which will confine itself to reviving use of their language, culture and traditions and which is supposed to be used "as an instrument of restoring the statehood of Soviet ethnic Germans." In order to make sure that the right decisions are adopted, the CPSU Central Committee has circulated to Party organizations secret instructions on the Communists' tactics in nominating "constructive" delegates to the Congress.

The activists of the all-Union society of Soviet ethnic Germans called Revival regard this line taken by the CPSU Central Committee as nothing but an attempt to substitute the restoration of the republic by the formation of an ethnic and cultural autonomy and as a scheme to remove the intransigent leadership of the Society from the political scene. Revival did not object to the Central Committee's suggestions provided they served to restore the Republic rather than to substitute it with something else.

It seemed that the two sides achieved a compromise at a session of the Congress organizing committee last December. The session participants agreed on restoring the autonomy in the Volga area, on setting up a national self-government system, on electing a committee for the restoration of the republic and the leadership of the Association. As the Congress drew near, however, it became increasingly clear, according to Reginald Zielke, Deputy Chairman of the Revival Society, that "The organizing committee did everything in accordance with the CPSU scenario, even the funding of preparatory work was done selectively, with money going to those who support the idea for an 'association'." This compelled 14 more radical members, including Heinrich Grout, Chairman of the Revival Society, to withdraw from the organizing committee.

Grout and his supporters worked out an alternative form of action: forming a provisional council of the German Autonomous Republics, electing fifty percent of its membership at the Congress, and reserving the rest of the seats for representatives of the Russian-speaking population of the Volga area and for local People's Deputies, imposing a six month moratorium on the Congress resolutions until they are endorsed by the supreme authorities of the USSR and the Russian Federation. If upon the expiry of the moratorium term parliaments and the Volga Area remain indifferent to the fate of Soviet ethnic Germans, the Provisional Council of the German Autonomous Republic is to form a government in exile and to get down to resettling its people in Germany.

In its turn, the organizing committee suggested the formation of a National Council – a kind of parliament without a territory. The Revival was not too enthusiastic about the idea. The vague functions this Council is vested with make its viability questionable.

Since the resolutions of the Congress will not be of a legislative nature, the Germans are counting on the benevolence of the national and Russian Federation's parliaments which alone can vest the provisional or national council with parliamentary powers.

Word has come from the Volga area that on the day of the referendum, March 17, local residents are to be polled on their attitude towards the restoration of the German Republic. Those who know the tactics of Saratov's Party leaders and their record of conducting "public opinion polls" can safely predict the results of the poll to come.

Soviet Germans will tell the Congress about their tragical fate, about the humiliations and repressions they have been subjected to, about their dashed hopes, about their efforts to restore de facto the Republic which no one has abolished de jure. Will their voices be heeded in the Kremlin, in the Russian "White House" and in the Volga Area? Or is our public purse in for losing those 80 billion rubles after all?

Konstantin Isakov,
a delegate to the First Congress of Ethnic Germans of the USSR

WAR IN THE GULF

100 hours that dispelled myths

The world's fourth strongest army defeated in an unprecedentedly short amount of time. New weapons, new strategies, new lessons

Evgeny Rusakov

This has been the first war against "the threat from the South" dramatically aggravated in conditions in which the threat of military conflict between the East and the West is minimized.

This has been a war that highlighted the danger of international terrorism. Saddam Hussein blackmailed the world with the threat of chemical weapons and radiological contamination. He also resorted to ecological warfare: the gigantic oil spill in the Persian Gulf is fraught with serious global ecological consequences.

Operation Desert Storm has dispelled many a myth.

One such myth is that of the South's ability to stand up to the North militarily. This ability existed only in the context of the East-West confrontation.

The main "threat from the South" is the threat of conflicts between developing countries themselves, economic and social upheavals which can spread there, and international terrorism. The militant and turbulent Islamic world, and its idea of "exporting the Islamic revolution" constitute a special danger.

Another myth was the might of Saddam's military machine. In the concluding stages of Operation Desert Storm, the world's fourth strongest army was overrun in just 100 hours. Yesterday's fellah-turned-tank driver cannot be effective in the fight against a well-trained professional. The Iraqi soldier was good enough when fighting the Iranian "guardian of the Islamic revolution," that is why Iraq preferred dumb Soviet tanks to advanced French-built ones stuffed with electronic hard- and software.

Saddam Hussein's arrogant threats to send the coalition troops swimming in their own blood and to use "top-secret superweapons" have also proved to be a bluff.

What war spoils

A testing range for high-tech weapons

The Gulf war has been the first war in the epoch of scientific and technological revolution. The largest ground operation since World War Two allowed the allied troops to test in the field a new generation of conventional armaments and the "air-ground battle" doctrine developed by the former NATO Commander-in-Chief Bernard Rogers. The new doc-

A prayer for peace

trine was worked out to be used in the European theatre of operations against the Soviet Union.

The "air-ground battle" doctrine stipulates the elimination of the enemy's first and follow-up echelons and reserve before they have been committed battle so as to gain the decisive success already on the initial stage of the war. The US army Field Manual published in 1982 says that the battle must be transferred to the enemy's rear and that the enemy's defences must be broken before the enemy has had time to recover from the first shock... Offensive combat operations on the ground and in the air to be quick and resolute and aimed at the enemy's most vulnerable spots, they must also be flexible and the success must be continually developed. The offensive must continue until the final victory has been won, the US Army Field Manual says.

The allied force's Commander-in-Chief Gen. Horman Schwarzkopf implemented the Field Manual instructions by sending the troops in southern Iraq to attack the rear of the Iraqi divisions in Kuwait and the elite Republican Guard units deployed in Iraq.

Accuracy and firepower are the most important distinctive features of the hi-tech weapons extensively used in the Gulf War. The new generation of armaments uses the latest achievements in electronics, microprocessor chips and heat-seeking devices. Electronic computer-controlled devices allow the smart missiles and bombs to find the targets and to correct the trajectory en route to the target to ensure an accurate hit.

As Marshal Akhromeyev noted in his interview for *New Times* an important innovation was introduced in the "air-ground doctrine" during the war with Iraq: the air raids against the enemy were made much more lengthy and powerful.

This allowed the Americans and their allies to decapitate the Iraqi ground forces, disorganize command, control and communication, destroy the potential of producing nuclear, chemical and conventional armaments.

In all wars, the US has one characteristic distinction: it values the life of every soldier. Sparing their soldiers' lives, US commanders in the Gulf started the war with massive air raids intended to break the enemy's combat worthiness and morale and to terrify the civilian population. Even today people in Germany remember the horrible allied bombings of Dresden and other cities and the Japanese remember not only Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but also the disastrously devastating bombings of Tokyo in the spring of 1945.

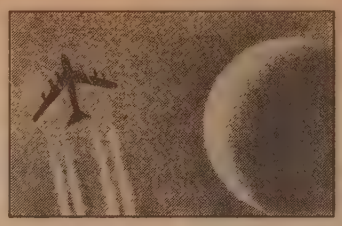
The air warfare has helped greatly to minimize the coalition's casualties in Operation Desert Storm while killing and forcing to surrender hundreds of thousands Iraqis.

A big "brilliant little war"

The United States has been lucky in all wars since its first overseas operation – the easy victory over Spain in the war for the Spanish colonies of Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines. "A brilliant little war," this name accurately described the ageing Spanish empire's tragic collision with a new world power.

The defeat in Vietnam, first in the history of the United States, resulted in a deep split in US society, a psychological shock and an unprecedented loss of public trust in the institutions of power, the armed forces in particular. I worked in America at that time and I remember the feeling of

shame and humiliation many Americans felt when they watched GIs escape to choppers from the roof of the US embassy in Saigon in spring, 1975. Then came an unprecedented upsurge of jingoism when Iranian students seized the US embassy and its staff in Teheran in November, 1979. The abortive attempt at rescuing the hostages from the embassy compound in Teheran buried Jimmy Carter's last hopes to be reelected for a second term.



At last, along came this big "brilliant little war." For the first time after 1945, 89 percent of Americans supported the President's policy for war. Bush acted resolutely, consistently and in a carefully calculated way. The Vietnam syndrome was overcome and America has regained self-confidence. Will this self-confidence develop into arrogance?

Judging by the President's statements, Bush remains cool even at the moment of celebration of this unexpectedly complete victory. As far as I know, Americans, despite their superiority complex, are nonetheless more inclined to display common sense and magnanimity at times of victory and successes than in the years of failures and defeats.

Naturally, Operation Desert Storm has an imperial dimension too. But in this case Washington's pragmatic, even egotistical interests vastly coincided with the will of the international community, with the interest to restore international justice and to promote new political thinking.

This was the first hot war in the region which has been an area of the US vital interest since the Carter presidency. When he sent troops to Arabia, Bush spoke not only about the noble task of punishing the aggressor, but also about a more trivial asset – oil.

Unhindered US access to raw materials and fuel is one of the principal objectives of Washington's foreign policy and military strategy. In the 20th century, the greatest tragedy for America was not the two world wars, but the Great Depression of the 1930s. The Great Depression is stronger than any other and can be compared only with the Soviet syndrome of 1941. The 1973 oil crisis and the resulting stagflation in the economy (a plight which is now familiar to us) revived the Americans' fears that a Great Depression might come again.

This amazing combination of pragmatism and idealism is characteristic of the

What Hussein has done to Kuwait

Saddam promised to turn Kuwait into a graveyard and almost remained true to his word

When the allies entered Kuwait City, what they saw was a terrible sight. The Iraqis had blown up all vital communications, power plants and water desalination facilities. Practically all oil wells had been set afire... Almost all administrative buildings, including the parliament, and hotels had been destroyed... Once immaculately tidy, the centre of the city was one enormous heap of rubble. Ash and debris lay everywhere... The overall damage to Kuwait is estimated at $100 billion...

In the early days of the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait City, Iraqi soldiers were allowed to loot it as occupiers did in the Middle Ages. Looting took place on an unprecedented scale. Hordes of Iraqi soldiers carrying submachine guns roamed the city dragging along bags swollen with the things they had stolen. The damage, from thefts from banks, jewelry shops and supermarkets alone amounts to $11 billion.

Tariq Razzuqi, the Kuwaiti ambassador in France, says he saw three waves of Iraqi looters. The first wave was 100,000 regular army soldiers with tanks and APCs. The second – the so-called people's army numbering another 100,000. The third – 50,000 Iraqi men and women bussed to Kuwait with the sole purpose of looting the shops.

The Iraqis felt no remorse for what they were doing. They said they were for equality of all Muslims: "If millions live in poverty and thousands bathe in luxury, those thousands' riches must be taken away and evenly shared among all Muslims."

The Saddam administration was the greatest looter, however. On the second day of the occupation, Baghdad seized Kuwaiti hard currency assets and transferred them to Iraq together with the expensive equipment for power generating plants and oil wells. Only some 10,000 cars were left in Kuwait out of the 800,000 that Kuwait had before the aggression. Iraq also seized jewels, precious books from the National Library of Kuwait, Kuwaity Airlines jets, medical equipment from practically all hospitals...

Obviously the demand for compensation ranks among the principal demands the world community addresses to the aggressor.

No compensations, however, can revive the Kuwaitis killed as a result of Iraqi aggression.

When I attended the 11th Gulf Cooperation Council summit in Doha, Qatar, last December, I saw amateur video recordings of Iraqi atrocities in Kuwait and listened to accounts of eye-witnesses. The well-known Kuwaiti actor, Khalil Zeinal told me how he saw Iraqis chop off the hands of one man whom they suspected of having contacts with the resistance. Then the Iraqi raped his wife and daughter in his presence... Another eye-witness – Abdallah – saw Iraqis kill two teenagers before their mother's eyes. Even mullahs were subject to torture...

The Middle East Watch believes that during the occupation the Iraqis made summary executions of Kuwaitis more than 700 times. Forteen Kuwaiti hostages were shot for every Iraqi soldier killed by the resistance. In all, approximately 12,000 Kuwaitis were killed and over 15,000 are listed as missing. The Iraqis arrested not only resistance fighters, but ordinary people found in possession of "illegal" literature, Kuwaiti flags or pictures of the Emir which they had been instructed to replace with portraits of Saddam Hussein...

Yakov Borovoi

Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf confers with defeated Iraqi generals

Photo from the newspaper Stars and Stripes (USA)

Americans. The Bush Administration's policy after the Iraqi aggression in Kuwait has been completely harmonious with this feature of the American national character. That is why this policy was so broadly supported.

A dinner is only as good as its price

The Iraqi occupation of Kuwait faced the Soviet Union with a difficult choice. On the one hand, Saddam was a Soviet ally, on the other hand, Moscow had to stay true to the principles of its widely advertised new political thinking. The best time to make this choice was the period between the Gorbachev-Bush summit in June and the November signing of the Paris Charter for a new Europe. The breakthrough in East-West relations allowed Moscow to assume a principled stance, to condemn its former client and to actively participate in the elaboration of energetic Security Council measures to check the Baghdad bully.

In the initial stages of the crisis, Soviet-American and East-West relations prevailed, but by last September's Gorbachev-Bush meeting, Moscow's pro-American stand began to change. The pro-Arab lobby and experts in Arab affairs became more vocal. Moscow consistently demanded a political solution and avoidance of a major war. The Americans have been reproached for having used Moscow's services when they were necessary and then ignoring the USSR. This is not true, however. Washington was making concessions: suffice it to remember its prolonging the Iraq deadline to withdraw until January 15, 1991.

The Soviet Union had weighty arguments that might have convinced Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait before the ground operations started. The threat that the scale and geography of the conflict might expand to near the Soviet borders, that mass extermination weapons might be used and new ecological catastrophes might occur seemed very real. Besides this, the forces which could not reconcile themselves with the Soviet Union's alliance with the "citadel of imperialism" tried to make the most of threats, both real and imaginary.

At the same time many Americans reacted to Moscow's efforts to achieve a peace like a person who paid for an expensive dinner only to see the main course be eaten up by a stranger. Senator Robert Dole, leader of the Republican minority leader said: "... the American people are not going to put up any more with the Kremlin's any involvement in or support for conditions that may endanger the allies' lives, save Saddam Hussein or help preserve the Iraqi military machine... We do not need any free advice."

Despite the fact that Washington was completely informed about Moscow's efforts towards peace, many American politicians regarded them as separatist. Wrote *The Sunday Telegraph*: "The forced smiles of official gratitude disguised the indignation of George Bush and his aides."

In the context in which Soviet-US relations had already been harmed by the events in the Baltics and the Soviet military's manipulations with the yet to be ratified CFE Treaty, Moscow's negotiations with the Iraqi leaders on the eve of Baghdad's capitulation did further damage to the Soviet-US cooperation.

What's in store?

The war in Iraq has dispelled many myths. Many aspects of international politics have become clearer.

Today, our main task is to set up a regional security structure for the Gulf and to render urgent aid to Kuwait and Iraq, whose economies are almost entirely destroyed. Continued cooperation of all the countries, not only of the participants in the war; a more active utilization of the UN potential and the potential of the Arab countries will be also of a great importance. That the US administration recognizes the importance of this cooperation is demonstrated by James Baker's recent decision to come to Moscow to negotiate a post-war settlement in the Gulf.

The war in the Gulf highlighted the tremendous potential of real cooperation of the international community and the potential the United Nations possesses to solve even the most complicated international problems.

Is the world prepared to use reasonably the positive experience of the six months' Gulf crisis? Is the world prepared to go farther? Is this country prepared to do so?

■

Why Baghdad lost

Marshal Akhromeyev on the war in the Gulf

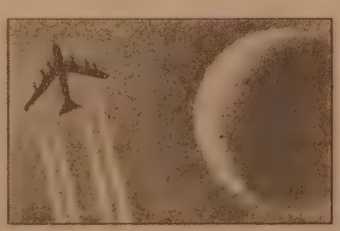
New Times. Not long ago, Academician Yevgeny Primakov wrote in *Pravda* that during the second Soviet-American summit in Helsinki in September of last year, you shared with the Americans your thoughts on the military preparedness of the Iraqi army. What were your predictions at the time and did they turn out to be correct?

Sergei Akhromeyev. In my talks with US administration officials in Helsinki, I suggested that a fight with the Iraqi army would not be an easy one. At that time I was convinced that instead of starting a war, it would be better to put into effect severe sanctions with the aim of effecting the complete economic and diplomatic isolation of Baghdad. In hindsight, taking into account the course of events and Saddam Hussain's actions, I feel that sanctions were unlikely to have forced Hussain to withdraw from Kuwait. Iraq possessed a powerful army, one tested in battle with Iran and directed by a well-oiled command structure.

Iraq's weak spot was its complete lack of naval forces. It had only a few combat and auxiliary ships. In addition, Iraq possessed virtually no nation-wide air-defence system whatsoever, only an air-defence system designed to protect troops from air attacks.

The Iraqi air force was no match for that of the coalition forces. Ground control centres of the Iraqi air force were destroyed and the air force as a service branch for all practical purposes simply ceased to exist, leaving the ground forces virtually defenseless before strikes from the air.

From the very beginning of hostilities, the Americans conducted their operations in accordance with the doctrine which calls for inflicting on the enemy a devastating blow from the air before beginning the ground offensive. According to traditional military thought, such air operations should be prosecuted for a period of five to seven days before the employment of ground forces. But accounting for the expected tough resistance of Iraqi ground forces, the American commanders decided to soften ground targets for a period of not seven but forty days. As a result, the command system of the Iraqi forces was seriously disrupted, its army demoralized and reduced to a state in which it was incapable of conducting effective military operations. This enabled the coalition forces in the final stages of the campaign to quickly and effectively achieve their assigned objectives.



From a purely military point a view, the Americans selected the optimal course of action. And there was no one there to hinder them in so doing. Things look different from the point of view of politics. In massive employment of air forces, inflicting damage only on military targets is what is hoped for but is something that is impossible to guarantee. A great deal depends on the weather. In addition, I feel the Americans set as their goal the destruction not only of military installations, but of economic potential of Iraq as well.

For the first time, advanced command control and communication systems were employed by a nation in battle. Many new weapon systems were used. A significant role was played by highly-accurate weapons such as steerable air-to-air and sea-to-air rockets and guided bombs.

Iraq is destroyed. But there is something to be learned from its actions as well. Impressive was its use of dummy installations on a strategic scale. The network of false targets and even military groupings in the first few weeks served to seriously disorient the Americans.

NT. Our military press of late assessed highly the Iraqi military and predicted that ground operations would be prolonged and bloody. Was this a case of our generals possessing inaccurate information, or were the American actions simply of type that could not have been predicted?

S.A. I have already answered this question in part. In issuing our assessment, we expected the Americans to adhere to the traditional length of time in conducting their preliminary air operations. The character of the conflict was significantly altered by the scope of the air bombardment which demoralized the Iraqi army.

NT. The war in the Gulf causes varying and sometimes even completely contradictory conclusions to be drawn. Some feel that an arms race with the Americans is senseless and that we should avoid coming up against them face to face. Others feel that we should concentrate all our efforts on catching up with the Americans, especially in the area of smart weapons. Where do you stand in this debate?

S.A. The political and military situation in the world is one that constantly changes and whom we might come up against face to face, as you say, often does not depend on us. That is the point of view our military takes. Others say that the war has pointed up all the flaws in Soviet military hardware and the superiority of American hardware. I feel that this is a mere propagandistic view. First of all, over the past 45 years the outcome of conflicts in which Soviet weapons have come up against American weapons have differed from conflict to conflict. Declaring that Soviet weapons are superior based on experience in Vietnam or in the Iran-Iraq conflict would be a primitive oversimplification. Asserting the opposite based on the results of this latest conflict would similarly not be correct. Second, one must take into account the men behind the machinery, and, most importantly, force ratios. In this war, the advantage held by the coalition forces was overwhelming. They held absolute superiority in naval forces and outnumbered their Iraqi counterparts in air strength even before the outbreak of hostilities by six to one. In addition, the Americans employed the very latest in military hardware whereas the Iraqis were armed with weapons made ten and twelve years ago. Iraq had no new weapons similar to those employed by the Americans.

I would like to emphasize that conducting an air offensive of such a duration against a similarly-equipped enemy would have been impossible.

Was the Iraqi leadership aware of the weak spots in its military? Of course it was. Why then did it make things come down to a suicidal war? Most likely we will receive a partial answer to this question in the near future.

The Soviet armed forces must also draw conclusions based on events in the Gulf. What conclusions should they draw? This question can be answered only after a thorough analysis of preparations for and the conduct of battle.

Does a military threat to our country really exist? Does Soviet military doctrine correspond to the real situation in today's rapidly changing world? What should our army look like given a strategy of rational sufficiency? These and other questions were answered by People's Deputy of the USSR and advisor to the President Marshal Sergei AKHROMEYEV during a discussion at the NT editorial office, a report on which will soon appear in our magazine.

New thinking that is no longer new

Georgy Kunadze,
Cand. Sc. (History)

It is time to choose between the policy based on the common understanding of freedom and democracy and the policy for which the socialist choice is the supreme goal

The impresive successes of the Gorbachev administration in the world arena do not mean that the Soviet Union has now a conceptually formulated foreign policy. On the contrary, the shaping of its policy is still at the initial or at least intermediate stage. Moreover, in the course of its evolution the new political thinking proclaimed in 1985 is steadily approaching the line beyond which the negation of some of its basic principles will become inevitable.

The instinct of self-preservation as policy

In the early years of perestroika the deideologization of our foreign policy was a truly revolutionary principle. In fact, deideologization has the same root as the well-known principle of "peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems." In both cases the starting point of reasoning is the thesis of ideological incompatibility between the Soviet Union and an absolute majority of states. From this point of view, deideologization is rather an outgrowth of the idea of peaceful coexistence than something fundamentally new.

As a matter of fact, deideologization gives not so much a motive to our foreign policy as an acceptable propagandistic justification for it. The crisis experienced by the Soviet Union compels it to seek agreements with antipode states in the fields where their positions were comletely incompatible only yesterday and to revise the ideologically determined approaches to various problems. There are enough examples of the effect of the new approach – the ending of the intervention in Afghanistan, the unification of Germany, the establishment of diplomatic relations with South Korea, a partial revision of aid programmes to "fraternal countries."

What is more significant in these actions – the conscious following of the principle of deideologization or the submission to unfavourable circumstances? To answer this question we should ask ourselves whether we would begin a radical correction of our foreign policy in other, slightly more favourable conditions. Probably we would not. Some of the agreements already reached would continue to wander in the bureaucratic labyrinth, while others would have been turned down right away.

So let's not deceive ourselves. The latest changes have become possible thanks mainly to the instinct of self-preservation, to elementary common sense, not to the principle of deideologization. It can be said, of course, that common sense amounts to deideologization, that the readiness to accept it as a guide to action is a considerable achievement for our virtually absurd system.

It would be strange, however, to declare that the standard of behaviour common to any civilized nation is a unique achievement of the human genius and, in particular, the conceptual basis of the new political thinking. Our ideology has always tended to take such a view of things. In fact, it is no more than self-conceit.

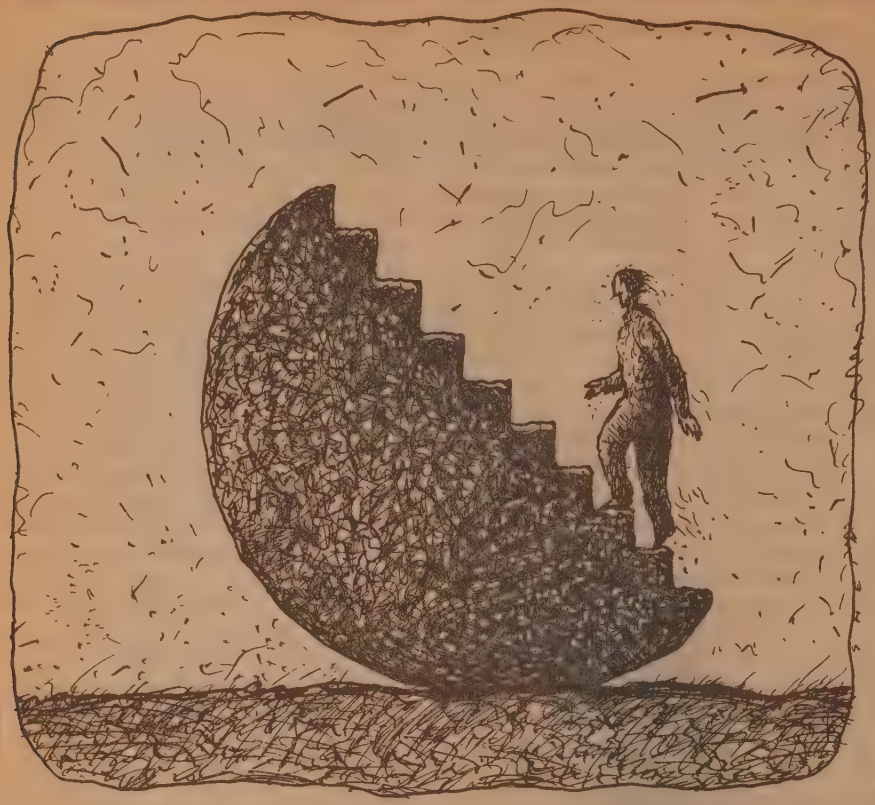
Continuing to declare the principle of deideologization of its foreign policy, the Soviet Union upholds, deliberately or not, its right to remain a preserve of socialism. It is a disastrous path, and not only because real socialism has proved bankrupt. By acting in this way we are placing a ticking time bomb under our foreign policy.

Forgotten motives

Foreign policy cannot be separated from internal policy. The two policies of a country are closely connected. If freedom and democracy are restricted inside a country, its foreign policy will sooner or later become extremist. This is so if only because a repressive regime of any kind is inconceivable without expansionist ambitions, without the cultivation of internal and foreign enemies as a source and justification of its existence.

The experience of Soviet foreign policy before perestroika confirms this thesis, and the experience of the time of perestroika does not contradict it either. The USSR has achieved successes on the world scene not only thanks to its foreign-policy initiatives. The process of democratization which began in this country also played a tremendous part. Though unskillfully, groping our way, we have drawn a little nearer to the West's understanding of civil freedoms, parliamentary democracy, the supremacy of laws in the foreign and domestic policies, and the significance of market relations in the economy.

This circumstance became a decisive factor in improving the international situation, and not



Drawing by Igor Shein

only because the Western nations have consistently defended such universal values as freedom and democracy and wanted to "reward" the USSR for its "good behaviour." The main reason lies elsewhere. Civil freedoms presuppose the right of every citizen to criticize the policy of his or her government while the institutions of parliamentary democracy enable the society to exercise control over it. The supremacy of laws, the observance of legal and moral standards of civilized behaviour by everyone, first of all supreme power, and the complete renunciation of the use of violence inside the country provide guarantees that the state will not resort to such actions in the world scene either.

As a result, the policy of a democratic government becomes rational and predictable. The source of international confidence lies in all these factors, not in certain specific agreements. The improvement of Moscow's relations with the West fundamentally differs in its character from the periods of the relaxation of tension in the past.

One can easily imagine how seriously totalitarian tendencies in Moscow's home policy can affect its relations with the outside world. The killing of people in the Baltic republics, the increased activity of reactionary forces, and attempts to smother freedom of speech at birth are certainly overshadowing the international situation. So far the West is evidently perplexed and displays caution. They will certainly give way to outright rejection if similar tendencies increase and become a standard of behaviour. It is characteristic that notes of a confrontation which seemed to have been forgotten are starting to be audible in the speeches of our own leaders.

Democracy – a long way off

However much one talks about deideologization, foreign policy will not benefit from it if genuine freedom and democracy are not ensured inside the country. It remains to understand whether socialism is compatible with these basic values, that is, whether it is possible in principle without restricting them.

Soviet people know since their schooldays that socialism is public ownership of the means of production, planned and proportionate, or proportionate and planned development in every sphere and, of course, an irreconcilable attitude to what contradicts it. Strictly speaking, the first two features of socialism rule out a genuine equality between forms of property and market relations in the economy. This conclusion has been amply borne out during the years of perestroika when futile attempts were made to reconcile socialism with economic expediency.

The irreconcilable attitude of socialism to other views of the social system represents a special interest, because it rules out real democracy as a mechanism of approving ideas by the people through voting. Henry Kissinger once noted that not a single Communist Party had ever won in honest elections. This statement has not been refuted yet. Indeed, none of the communist regimes has been able to prove its legitimacy in a democratic way, preferring simply to exclude democracy from political life.

Suffice it to take the examples of North Korea and Cuba, the last bastions of pure socialism, the countries ruled by totalitarian regimes, with no freedom or democracy. On the contrary, almost all communist regimes in Eastern Europe have lost the elections as soon they lost Soviet support needed to keep the people in check.

What is the situation in the Soviet Union, where socialism is still being reformed? Do we have freedom and democracy? We apparently have a certain degree of freedom and democracy. This is proved at least by the publication of the article. But, broadly speaking, we have a long way to go to attain democracy. The Soviet Union does not yet have legislative bodies elected in a truly democratic way. The quotas set for the representation of "public" organizations at the Congress of People's Deputies and, as a result, in the Supreme Soviet of the USSR have made these bodies obedient to the Communist Party leadership. The same bodies have elected the president and vice-president, who thus avoided a national election.

It is clear that the system of representation of public organizations will not survive until the next general election, for otherwise quotas would also have to be set for new, truly public organizations. This means that all people's deputies will be elected on the basis of direct and equal suffrage. Will our system allow such elections? Will it become democratic in this way? In other words, will the present leadership consisting wholly of Communist Party members agree to risk the positions, views and ideas of its party in an open contest with the opposition? The answer to this question is not yet known.

On behalf of the people the President of the USSR continues to vow his loyalty to the socialist choice. The limit of democracy is set in this way: any view is permissible, but only within the framework of socialism.

It will be recalled what hue and cry party functionaries and generals raised against "the restoration of the bourgeois system" in the Baltic republics in reply to the charges that they had attempted to overthrow the legally elected authorities there.

Thus, it has not been proved that real socialism is compatible with freedom and democracy. And, I think, it will be impossible to prove this until our society gets rid of the old habit of adjusting the reality to ideological clichés. We need an economy not restricted by any taboos. We need freedom and democracy. The future of our country depends on these factors, not on how we shall call our social system.

In this case the deideologization of foreign policy must not be regarded as its effective and long-term conceptual basis. Sooner or later we shall have to choose between a policy based on the common understanding of freedom and democracy and a policy for which the socialist choice is the supreme goal. If we choose the first path, the need to deideologize foreign policy will not arise, and if we choose the second path the tendencies of the confrontational foreign policy of the recent past will inevitably recur. They will be contained only by the real possibilities of the country and the political will and wisdom of its leaders. But it is evidently not a sufficient guarantee that, having overcome its present crisis, the Soviet Union will not return to the policy of ideologically motivated expansionism.

Solidarity against justice

Another well-known postulate of new thinking – the priority of universal human values over class ones – should be considered as well. Our orthodox Marxists have fought against it for a long time. The very notion of universal human values is a terrible heresy for them. A sort of abstract humanism. On the contrary, less orthodox Marxists seem to recognize universal human values. But they do so in a somewhat strange way, by proving that class values, far from contradicting, fully agree with universal human values. That is why, they argue, by defending universal human values we also defend class ones. The opposite also seems to be true: by fighting for class values, they fight for universal human values as well. At first glance, this argument adds nothing to the understanding of Soviet foreign policy. It merely helps to prove "theoretically" why our state, loyal to class principles, does not attack ideologically alien neighbours. For Marxist ideology and communist rhetoric interpret class struggle as the motive force of history. They call for waging it until class antagonisms are completely abolished after which an epoch of universal human values will begin.

One can understand the reasons for devising the concept of the priority of universal human values as one restraining sound class instincts. After several years of a growing confrontation between the Soviet Union and the West it was necessary to return with the greatest possible dignity to the policy of détente. Mikhail Gorbachev formulated the following thesis in his book: "Now, with the appearance of weapons... of mass annihilation, there has arisen an objective limit for the class confrontation in the world arena: it is the threat of total destruction. A real ... universal human interest has arisen for the first time – to avert the disaster hanging over civilization."

This statement should have been made some forty years ago. But it is not sufficient nowadays. Another thing is more important: it turns out that only the presence of weapons of mass annihilation guarantees the world against a resumption of class confrontation in the world arena or, simply speaking, against the ideologically motivated expansion of the USSR in other countries. The awareness of this circumstance will hardly impel the West to begin a really large-scale reduction of nuclear and other weapons.

In fact, the notion of universal human values is immeasurably broader than the natural desire to survive and avert nuclear war. It also includes freedom (with the freedom of every nation to choose its own path of development), democracy and international justice. In such an interpretation universal human values have little in common with class ones. The point is not even that the class values formulated (God knows when) on behalf of the proletariat have long outlived this class, as Marx saw it, and have become divorced from the social structure of modern society.

The war in the Persian Gulf shows that such a basic class value of Marxist as anti-imperialist solidarity obviously contradicts elementary international justice. The first calls for supporting the forces fighting against US "imperialism". Iraq was such a force in the given case. The second presupposes countering the actions of an aggressor, Iraq in the given case, and cooperation with all champions of justice. The Soviet Union finally expressed its support for actions of the anti-Iraqi coalition. But it was a painful choice made in fact by way of exception, mostly for considerations of expediency, at a time when the leadership of the country and a part of the general public were not prepared to revise their attitude to the class value of anti-imperialist solidarity.

It can therefore be stated that in its present form the concept of the priority of universal human values is essentially close to the principle of deideologization of foreign policy. In the given case emphasis is laid on the Soviet Union's ideological incompatibility with almost the whole world.

I am not trying to find fault with the architects of new thinking. They have done a great deal for a radical renovation of Soviet foreign policy. It is not their fault that the ideologized postulates of the new thinking are becoming obsolete in the eyes of the public. The progress of the public consciousness awakened by perestroika has proved much quicker than most of us thought a couple of years ago. The leadership of the country is not an exception in this respect, the more so that common sense has been enough until recently for removing the obstacles created by the policies of Brezhnev and Andropov. It simply did not have time to bring the concepts up to date.

However, time is up or is running out. One should think seriously what the foreign policy of our country should be. This must be done without looking back at the ideologized stereotypes of the past, without strenuous attempts to link the new policy with them.

It is evidently not a matter of working out simply a logical concept of foreign policy but also, and possibly in the first place, of creating prerequisites for putting it into effect. Without this any idea or proposal, however convincing it may sound, will remain on paper only.

(To be continued.)

Raul Roa Couri, deputy foreign minister of Cuba, granted an interview to *New Times* reporter Elena Gorovaya before he flew to Geneva to attend as head of the Cuban delegation the 47th session of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights. He is a career diplomat and son of Raul Roa, the first foreign minister of revolutionary Cuba

"We do not want to pleas

You said in one of your interviews that "the human rights problem cannot be used for political purposes." Does this mean that you do not regard human rights as a political issue?

I meant to say that we are against using the issue of human rights as a political tool by any state. The United States' "concern" over the human rights situation in Cuba is merely part of the ideological confrontation between Yankee imperialism and Cuba engendered by the victory of the revolution on the island. It is like hagging at the market. The Commission on Human Rights has been set up with a view to countering this approach.

Would you describe Cuba as a democratic state and its socialist model as democratic socialism?

Certainly. I do not doubt that in the least.

How then does one explain persecution of dissidents, strict restrictions in public life and the absence of a legal opposition?

To begin with, I don't know what persecution of dissidents you are referring to because I don't know what kind of dissidents you have in mind. There are enemies of the revolution in Cuba. Some of them are stooges of imperialism. It was not the purpose of our revolution to allow its enemies to thrive in our country and defame the revolution... Only those who violate the laws of the state are prosecuted in Cuba and brought before the court or a tribunal.

Is there any prospect of legalizing the political opposition in Cuba?

I don't understand what political opposition you are talking about. The vast majority of Cubans are in favour of socialism. It is the choice of the overwhelming majority of the population. That is why it has legal force for us. However, we are resolutely against counterrevolution, the annexation of Cuba by the United States, either physical or ideological. The opposition in Cuba can only be hostile to the revolution. It will be the opposition of those who stand for imperialism and the restoration of capitalism. We shall not allow such an oppoosition in Cuba.

our enemies”

Cuba's nearest neighbour is the most powerful imperialist state which tried to kill our leaders and invaded our country with the help of mercenaries in 1961. The US Administration has not given up its intention to overthrow our socialist system.

How can you assume that we shall allow small number of enemies to engage in politics? Do you really think that we shall permit enemies of the people to engage in subversive activity against our country? That is like supposing that the Soviet Union could allow a group of persons representing foreign interests to form a political party in the territory with a view to overthrowing the Soviet system. This is nonsense. Or do you think that the United States would tolerate the existence of a party financed by foreign secret services for subversive activity against its system? There is no opposition in Cuba.

You have said that you do not regard the current political processes in the Soviet Union as a return to capitalism. However, different parties have lately been formed in the USSR. There is an opposition, and a struggle between ideas and opinions is going on. Sometimes the struggle ends in a confrontation. I don't want to say that confrontation is a boon. But, as I see it, political pluralism is essential to democracy, whereas you assert that in Cuba (because of its specific conditions) the door to pluralism will never be opened.

I didn't say "never." I merely assert that in present-day conditions, the opposition in Cuba can only be an enemy of the revolution. As long as these conditions remain, opposition activity cannot be allowed. The situation in Cuba differs from that in the Soviet Union. So the parallels you draw have nothing in common with realities in Cuba.

Does this mean that democracy in Cuba differs from democracy in the Soviet Union?

Democracy in Cuba is the government of the people, by the people and for the people. This is how Lincoln defined democracy.

How would you explain the absence of democratic legislation on emigration in Cuba? Wouldn't it be better to let the steam out of the pot by allowing those who wish to leave the country to leave without hindrance?

There is no ban on emigration in Cuba. There are only restrictions of a provisional character connected with military service and the specific character of some professions. As is well-known, education is free in Cuba. That is why, say, if a doctor wants to emigrate, he must first compensate the government for the expenses involved in his training. As in all other countries, there are restrictions for army officers and staff members of the interior ministry and the state apparatus who have access to secret information.

There is one other important thing. One must get a visa to leave the country. Under our agreement on emigration with the United States, 20,000 Cubans can theoretically emigrate to the US every year. However, the United States issues no more than 4,500 visas.

Furthermore, many of those so called gentlemen, who wish to emigrate, do not want to go to Mexico, Peru or any other Third World country. They want to go only to the United States, and the latter does not grant visas to them.

But suppose you seize a motor boat and flee from Cuba illegally, possibly even killing someone... You arrive in Miami where you are given a hero's welcome and immediately receive the status of a political refugee. Such is the double standard of the United States.

Our stand on emigration is clear. Cuba is a developing nation. We do not have enough hard currency to allow everyone to leave Cuba and travel around the world. If you have relatives in the United States and want to go there, go right ahead. But you must pay for the ticket. We do not have funds for this purpose.

It is not a matter of the state having to pay for the tickets. The difficulties connected with emigration from Cuba give grounds for dissatisfaction. The tough character of Cuban laws on emigration is often explained by Havana's fear of a brain and manpower drain. Is this not the case?

I don't know how many people want to

leave our country. According to US figures, about 14,000 people have applied for visas to emigrate.

In the post-revolution history of Cuba there were two mass emigrations – in 1966 and 1980. But then the outlets were closed. Why did this happen?

It happened so first of all because Havana had concluded an agreement on emigration with the United States regulating the flow of Cubans to that country. The US Administration is against unlimited emigration from Cuba. Moreover, it forced many of those who emigrated in 1980 to return home. The United States does not need these people because most of them have no professions. They are declassed elements.

How would you comment on charges that Cuba exercises strict control over the media?

In my opinion there is freedom of the press in Cuba. I have not been engaged in journalism lately. In the past I had my column in the newspaper *Revolucion* and contributed to other newspapers, and I must say that none of my articles published in Cuba were censored.

However, the Cuban press is closed to the enemies of the revolution. For the same reason for which we do not allow the opposition in our country – it can only be counterrevolutionary.

Judging from your words, any person dissatisfied with the present regime must be regarded as a counterrevolutionary.

Ours is a revolutionary regime, the socialist regime defending the interests of the overwhelming majority of the people.

According to data of Cuba's interior ministry, five to seven percent of the population are not satisfied with the present regime.

I don't know these data, but this is quite possible.

Cuban emigrants believe that 80 to 85 percent of the people are discontented with the regime.

Cuban emigrants can say what they like. But I would say something different. In Latin America everyone who would like to leave his country and work in the United States has the right to do that. But the United States takes in only prominent specialists, that is, it absorbs brilliant minds.

People want to leave Cuba for purely economic reasons, hoping for a better life in the United States. Cuba is the only developing country whose child mortality rate is comparable with that of highly industrialized states. It has no unemployment.

I've heard that 400,000 Cubans, mainly young people, are fully or partially unemployed.

Where did you get this figure? I have no such information. Do you have an official source?

It is unofficial information

Since it is unofficial, it has no relation to Cuban realities.

Comrade Deputy Minister, you are a Marxist, and Marx is known to have supported the old maxim, "power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely." Do you agree with this idea?

I certainly do.

Cubans critical of the regime believe that Fidel Castro and the Communist Party of Cuba enjoy unlimited power.

You read Yankee literature.

Not only. I also read the literature of other "nationalities."

No, you read Yankee literature. I know these pieces and they are of an intertaining character. Those who allege that Fidel Castro has unlimited power do not know him well. They do not know Cuba, its people and Communist Party. They do not know how people's power functions.

It is not clear then what prevents holding direct elections of Fidel Castro as head of the state.

Why hold such elections? To please our enemies?

Elections are needed to remove any uncertainty and reaffirm that Fidel Castro is indeed backed by the majority of the Cuban people.

But Cubans have no doubts on this issue.

How can this be known without voting?

We conduct opinion polls every month. Do you think that a small country like Cuba, with a mere ten million-strong population, could exist this long if the people did not back the socialist regime?

You evidently base your reasoning on Soviet experience, on the history of the Soviet Union. But this has nothing to do with Cuban realities.

Is this really so? I understand that some features of the Soviet model of socialism have been copied by Cuba.

Unfortunately, we have copied the worst features. I have in mind economic management in the first place. This does not apply to the political system, however, because the Communist Party of Cuba has always been built on what we call "the line of the masses." It is a party of the people and therefore it carries authority with them, as distinct from the parties which were made up in East European countries and did not represent anyone.

The people elect their representatives to the government. We have two-tier elections at the provincial level and three-tier elections at the National Assembly level. Who said it is not a democratic system?

As for direct elections, the Cuban people did not ask to hold them. The Cubans are satisfied with the present government and election system. So why hold direct elections? To please the Americans?

Direct elections are needed to dispel doubts and remove the ground for charges against Cuba so that no one would ask similar questions.

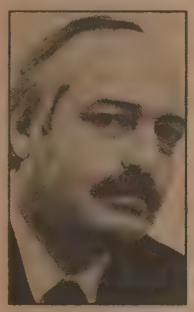
I don't care a bit about these doubts and charges. Why should I worry about American doubts with regard to Cuba? That is their problem. I am not going to live the way Americans would like me to. I live as I like, to please myself and not the Americans. I don't care what they think about me.

At every session of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, Cuba is charged with the violation of civil liberties. Today Cuba is mentioned among countries where such violations are most evident. Are you going to refute these charges by using the same arguments as in the interview?

Yes, I shall refute them. Human rights are not violated in Cuba. They are violated in the United States. Take the rights of Indians or blacks, for instance. Do you know the average life expectancy of American Indians? It is 40 years. The average life expectancy of blacks is 60 and white Americans 75 years. Do you know the situation in American prisons or the condition of imprisoned Puerto-Ricans in the United States? It is the United States which violates human rights.

In Cuba, human rights are not violated. People are not imprisoned for their views. There are no tortures in Cuba. There are no missing people... ■

Back to federation



Alexei Bukalov

"Something new is always happening in Africa," ancient wisdom tells us. Confirming this tradition, world news agencies have reported about a prospect that one of Africa's oldest wars may soon be over.

After the shooting stopped in the Gulf, the roar of cannonade coming from other flashpoints became much more audible. The long-suffering Horn of Africa is now attracting international attention. By the way, one of the ancient names of Ethiopia, Habesha, means "a mixture." A mixture of races, languages, religions and customs.

Two Abyssinian rulers who bore the title "neguse negest," which means "king of kings," Menelik II and Haile Selassie I, have gone down in history as the creators of a patchwork Ethiopian Empire. Haile Selassie's last acquisition is called by the majestic Latin name Eritrea, which if translated loosely means "The Land by the Red Sea." In 1952, acting on the basis of a UN General Assembly resolution, Haile Selassie formed a federation of Ethiopia and Eritrea and ten years later unilaterally reduced Eritrea's status to that of one of the Ethiopian provinces. Since then the Eritreans have been waging a bitter struggle against Ethiopian domination. The conflicting sides use state-of-the-art weapons (including Soviet-made weapons) causing a great loss of human life and materiel tens and thousands of captives and forcing hundreds of thousands of people to flee their homes. Once flourishing Eritrean cities – white stoned Massawa on the Red Sea coast and picturesque Asmara in the highlands – have turned into "combat zone objectives" which are constantly changing hands, with all the ensuing consequences for the civilian population and the architectural landscape.

It must be noted that Soviet-made weapons are used in Eritrea by both sides: the government troops obtain them directly from the USSR and the rebels are supplied via some Arab countries.

Like a scorching desert wind, echoes of the Gulf war swept across many high-bouring countries, highlighting the logic and essence of geopolitical alliances and confrontations in the region. The Eritrean problem has never been exclusively an internal affair of Ethiopia. As the situation around Eritrea changed, the approaches to the problem on the part of foreign powers changed too. In today's conditions, how appropriate is the idea of turnig the Red Sea into an "Arab lake," in case Eritrea cedes from Ethiopia and joins the Arab League? Middle Eastern leaders belonging to antagonistic ideological stands used to like the idea. Western sources believe that the most generous donors of the Eritrean rebels are "the oil sheikhs" and such leaders as Muammar al-Gaddafi and Saddam Hussein. The latter, though, is having greater headaches than Eritrea at the moment...

In any case, it seems that the Menelik II – Haile Selassie I empire cannot go on existing in its old form. The armed separatist struggle which enveloped Northern Ethiopia in the 1950s –1970s did not stop after the 1974 revolution, and actually intensified and developed into nothing less than a large-scale civil war. This reminds me of how they play chess in Ethiopia: the game goes on after you've lost your king. In the conditions of famine and deadly draughts, the Mengistu regime, which has dropped its official devotion to Marxism only recently, has decided to make concessions. The Ethiopian government is reported to have offered to the rebels that the country's federal status abolished by King Selassie be restored. Moreover, there have been rumours of another round of peace talks between the regime and the armed opposition going on in Washington and mediated by former US president Jimmy Carter. The Ethiopian government has also been hinting that a referendum could be held on Eritrea's complete independence.

How they play chess in Ethiopia: after you've lost the king, the game goes on

Like a big pie, a big empire is easier to bite at from the edges, Benjamin Franklin believed. What had been right in the 18th century remains right for the 20th century as well.

Nationalism is becoming a popular infection spreading faster than the AIDS virus. The problems of federations and referenda are tormenting not only Canada, the Baltics, the Caucasus or Yugoslavia, but Africa's most ancient country as well.

Reports from the Horn of Africa remind one of at least two universal truths. First, all problems concerning self-determinations must be settled exclusively at the bargaining table. Second, generous arms supplies to possible areas of instability can bring about endless sufferings of innocent people.

■

Even if the emperor has nothing on at all...

Humor and common sense got the upper hand in "one, separate country" – Denmark

An impessive-looking policeman began to explain something sternly to a Turk, who was looking for something in the grass together with his little son.

– You are also looking for chestnuts, aren't you? – the policeman asked me. To tell the truth, my "no" sounded rather hasty. The policeman unlocked an iron-coated gate and brought the arrested to an island in the middle of the pond with a toy pagoda on it where ordinary visitors were not allowed. – So that's where his residence is! – I guessed, astonished by the crafty policeman. The robust fellow pointed to the ground and burst out laughing when the scared Turks realized that he had simply brought them to a place full of chestnuts.

Smiles and jokes have become quite common in Denmark. There have never been or will be any revolutions there. Local wits say that it rains too often and people are used to having dinner no later than 6:30. Now, who would start a revolution with an umbrella in his hand at the risk of staying hungry if the revolution continues well into the night? Besides, people do have something to lose apart from their non-existent chains.

The national political culture dictates an entirely different way of solving problems; through gradual, perhaps not always effective reforms which do not throw the society from one extreme to another. Temperance and the desire to avoid critical situations are cultivated, while extremism and a yearn for "decisive measures" and "hot clashes" are considered atavistic.

– Denmark has enjoyed well-being for over one hundred years. How lucky is a country which has such a ruler – wrote Voltaire in 1767. The Danes have been lucky indeed: sensible monarchs promoted progress, while stupid ones did not interfere with it. Although many of them were born outside Denmark, love for Denmark united them stronger than blood bonds. The grandfather of the present queen brought his wife from Germany, but during World War II she supported the Danish Resistance Movement. By the way, the monarch himself invented an original way of participation in it: he remembered the traditional right of the King and every day rode on horseback around Copenhagen encouraging his subjects and irritating the invaders. The reigning queen Margrethe II married a French nobleman, who skillfully defends the interests of the Royal family inside the country and the interests of Denmark abroad. Even his weakness for wine-making causes no gossip among Danes who prefer to drink beer.

To take the best from other European nations, be it new ideas or the replenishing of the national genetic fund has always been considered a sensible way of overcoming the narrow-mindedness and provinciality of a small country. The sparse population (which numbers a mere 5 million) allows one to see the individual against the background of a crowd and avoid the danger of attributing the country's successes to racial or national superiority. The Danes know their place on the map of Europe, and their monarchs – on the Royal genealogical tree. Long gone are the times of grandeur of the Kingdom of Denmark, when it reigned from the North of the continent to its central regions. Having reconciled themselves with the failure of imperial ambitions, the Danish monarchs managed to do a great deal on their own modest territory. No wonder that even in their colonies – on Greenland and the islands sold in the Caribbean, Danish colonizers are treated with warmth.

A premier at the sewing machine

True, Kings and Queens have long lost real authority in the country, having yielded the reins of government of ministers. But even real policy makers are not too far from the people. To make a successful career a politician must be democratically-minded, although this feeling may not always be sincere. Most Danes are used to riding bicycles – so cabinet members are not afraid to arrive at the office with trouser legclippings. Unfortunately, the threat of international terrorism makes it hard for ministers to pedal around Denmark nowadays. And yet how nice it is to see a minister riding a khaki coloured bike instead of a black limousine.

Poul Schlüter, a master of political manoeuvre, has been heading the government for nine years now, and all these years he's been supported by the minority in Parliament. You think he complains of "objective circumstances" when he defends his policies? Not at all. If it's hard to get support in the Folketing for his program of "tightening the belts" the premier sits at a sewing machine and poses for photographers as he narrows his pants. The next day the leader of the opposition congratulates him on a successful move. And on the eve of elections humorous remarks are made that the government is unable to provide fine weather, and bragging is heard about the international achievements of Danish football while the ruling coalition is in power. Of course, when they choose whom to vote for, voters are first and foremost concerned with the pay they will receive and shop prices. But if they cannot get a clear-cut answer to their questions, they listen to politicians, especially if what they say is not too boring or pessimistic. With this in mind, Poul Shlüter stakes his clout on optimism and has abandoned the word "crisis" for good, for he believes that there's no use scaring people in vain. And if times get hard he prefers to encourage people with a smile rather than pull a wry face.

History knows several states where the Chairman of the Council of Ministers could name the price of all suits sold in the country in one year. But it could happen only in Denmark that the minister of state took me by the elbow and immediately named the price of my jacket. "I bought the same one on sale" – he explained with pleasure. Someone may consider this a sign of pettiness and narrow-mindedness – someone, but not the Danes. They love and appreciate everything that is "theirs," even if it is something quite insignificant. A hill, 147 metres high, is called "The Sky Mountain" (the highest peak of the Kingdom is 172 metres above sea level.) The same is true of humor in politics and in life – it's hard to meet the highest peaks of humor in Denmark, but the general level of it is pretty high.

Take for intance the country's Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen. No sooner had Edward Shevardnadze raised the question of American radars violating the ABM Treaty during a meeting with his Danish counterpart than the latter answered with a parable about ... a

dachshund. "My Arnold is 13 years old, he is very sensitive and barks at everyone, but he can't bite anyone, – just like a radar," – joked Ellemann-Jensen.

Humour helps them live and work

Our ministers have learnt to argue for hours on end whether the anti-missile radars serve defensive or offensive purposes. But they do lack a sense of humour. What a pity! Suffice it to see the funeral expressions of the face of any of Soviet "heads of ministries or institutions" and you feel so hopeless and so angry that all you can do is either laugh (alas, without any support from above) through tears and try to improve the situation by your own efforts, or clench your teeth and break everything around you.

To be objective – that's what the Supreme Soviet is gravely demanding from journalists – we must admit that the scope of problems facing Denmark cannot be compared to ours. True, every tenth citizen is jobless, and the foreign debt is enormous, but the foodstores are full and there's plenty of beer in the country's bars. So life is quite bearable there and we wish we had their problems. Regrettably, to boost production, farmers use a great deal of chemicals which pollute underground waters and the sea. Yes, the country is literally bathing in beer, but the per capita consumption of pure alcohol is a record high for North European people – 12 litres a year (that's twice as high as in Sweden and Norway) and in Greenland it is still higher – 20 litres! I know that our sceptics won't be moved by these figures: quite a few Russian rivers have been polluted and too many Russians and Chuckchi are turning into drunkards in the North.

However, there is a field where Denmark is tragically ahead of us and that's the spreading of AIDS. It seems that there should be no place for jokes here. On the contrary, the broad campaign of advertizing measures to prevent the horrible desease widely uses humour. "Tutorial movies" based on Hans Christian Andersen's fairy-tales have been made, where the "Swineherd," "The Princess and the Pea" and other characters explain to youngsters "what's what" and "what should not be done". In "The Emperor's New Clothes" the monarch happens to have nothing on – no condom – which causes corresponding reaction among those who witness his disgrace. It is noteworthy that the movies were sponsored by National television and the Health Ministry, rather than by some rascals who make a profit out of the nation's misfortune. The best actors consider it an honour to play in these films, realizing clearly that no matter how hard you scare people they won't turn away from sex, while humor helps to discuss most delicate aspects of sexual life.

Humor is a strong weapon not only in the hands of authorities, but also in the hands of business, particularly, the insurance business. Its representatives, who operate billions of crowns, are considered "filibusters" even among financiers, therefore common people do not mind nipping off a little piece (around 100 million crowns a year) from their cake. Minor swindlers are not terrorized by Draconic methods in Denmark. Therefore the "secret service" of insurance companies investigates suspicious cases and regularly provides newspapers with the funniest (and at the same time the most scandalous) of them, in order to prevent their repetition.

–What do you think about things?
–What is there to say about them?
–That's what I think too

Take the following story from the press: Jensen's Volvo was stolen. And in four weeks he was supposed to receive from the insurance company 54.000 crowns. However, several days after the theft he accidentally found the car and hid it in his mother's barn, so as not to loose the money. Three years later a truck lost its trailer three hundred metres away from that barn, and the trailer rolled downhill and broke the barn and the Volvo. The police offered Jensen his car wreckage (uninsured) costing 300 crowns and the insurance company recovered from him 70.000 crowns(interest). The readers laughed when they read this story but they will think twice before they try anything like that. Just what the insurance company needs.

Sometimes humor in Denmark is connected with weapons. First some enthusiast would buy a radio-buoy from a Soviet submarine at a sale of things cast ashore by the sea, and would sell it to the Defence Ministry, then teen-agers would steal a tank and leave it outside the barracks. Or another incident – a popular comic actor Erik Clausen found(?) mortar in his garden and dragged it to the square outside the parliament building and the prime-minister's residence. Nobody fired it, but they gave it a new coat of paint and "loaded" it with a national flag. "Damned pacifists" – grumbled one officer. "But what a sense of humor!" – said another.

The ability and desire to make life jollier and therefore better is an important feature of Danish people. People in Denmark can make fun of everything, even something considered sacred. In Helsingör, where Hamlet was supposedly born, a Shakespear theatre festival is held regularly. At one of them an avant-garde theatre company presented the Prince of Denmark as a worn out businessman and play-boy. And the other characters of the famous tragedy were a match for him, all of them endowed with modern qualities and sins. Ofelia was a prostitute, Rosencrantz Guildenstern – homosexuals. A questionable interpretation of the classical tragedy, but very funny indeed.

Tell me what you're laughing at and I'll tell you who you are.

Alexander Polyukhov,
our own correspondent
COPENHAGEN–HELSINGOR–
STOCKHOLM

THE ARMY AND SOCIETY

Alternative service

Photo by Sergei Podlesnov

In civilized countries, anyone who for reasons of religion and world outlook cannot bear arms, may choose alternative service. In this country the argument as to what this unfamiliar term implies continues

Alexander Pronozin

Should a young man of draft age be associated with a religious sect forbidding army service or should he be a Tolstoyan or pacifist, society has no right to force him to go against his conscience or penalize him by prison or concentration camp incarceration. The young man in question may discharge his social obligation as a hospital orderly, as an attendant caring for the bedridden, or as an environmentalist. That is a world-wide custom.

In this country, though, a person's private convictions give no grounds for deferment as the said obligation is constitutionally ordained. Draft dodging is penalized under Article 80 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation and under analogous articles of the Criminal Code of other republics by deprivation of liberty up to a term of three years. Even so, having completed this term of punishment the young person is again conscripted and a repeated refusal to bear arms entails the stiffer penalty of five years imprisonment.

The document the Copenhagen meeting of the 1990 Conference on the Human Dimension adopted dealing with alternative service declares that the participating states agree to consider the issue of introducing, wherever this has still not been done, different forms of alternative service to accord with the motivations of conscientious objectors with moreover such forms not to be associated in principle with

service in regular units but to be of a civilian nature, socially beneficial and not punishable. The Soviet Union also signed this document.

Conscientious objection

The Centre for Social and Psychological Studies under the Chief Political Administration of the Soviet Army and Navy disclosed in a recent sociological poll that the public attitude toward the army is "primarily negative" Why? Afghanistan; the tarnished image of the external enemy; the mounting movements for national self-determination in the constituent republics; the wholesale violation of human rights in the army; the use of the army to settle political problems at home. No wonder, so many young peodple are loth to bear arms.

According to official statistics, in 1988 and 1989 conscientious objectors numbered respectively 1,044 and 6,647. In the spring of 1990 this number was five times more as in the whole of the previous year, while as of January 1 last the 1990 autumn draft plan fell short of its target by 21.2 percent.

In the Leningrad Military district the number of conscientious objectors in 1989 was 20 times more than in the year before. Anatoly Obukhov, the Leningrad military commissar, said that after last year's spring draft 214 cases of draft dodgers had been referred for prosecution.

Vladimir Bespalov, Moscow's military commissar noted that whereas in 1988 there had been 67 draft dodgers, in 1989 the cases of 323 such young men had been referred for prosecution, while in the spring of 1990 more than one and a half thousand young men nearing conscriptable age refused to register for the subsequent draft.

Three years ago the contributor, **Alexander Pronozin,** who is now 20, addressed a letter to the USSR Defence Minister setting out his reasons for conscientous objection. In December 1989, prosecution was launched and in expectation of arrest, Alexander drew up a speech that he intended to make in court. However, law enforcers seemed to have ignored him and, as he can neither continue with his studies, nor take up employment, he has gone in for politics in the Transnational Radical Party, and is also theoretically arguing the need for alternative service.

Making'em serve

With the growing number of servicemen who refuse to make parachute drops, fire guns or march, more and more cases are being referred for prosecution. Though, the number of convicted does not increase at a similarly progressive rate. Law enforcers allude to the deteriorating criminogenic situation and are loth to arraign every draft dodger.

Possibly this motivated the somewhat milder penalties that the law does not prescribe. A first-time refusal to live in army barracks usually entails from 18 to 24 months of forced labour at "economic construction projects." A second such refusal entails two years in a concentration camp. By the autumn of 1990 only 38 of the young men dodging the spring draft had been convicted.

Though qualifying all draft dodgers as such, neither law enforcers, nor the military ever discriminate between the three trends of such objections to serve.

We would classify as the **first group** young men in some constituent republics often regarding the Soviet Army as that of a foreign power, which moreover supports a regime encroaching upon national independence. The absence of normal relations between the republics and Moscow, along with the "war of

Choices in the Russian empire

At the close of the 18th century Mennonite pacificists seeking to avoid conscription in Holland and Prussia took refuge in Russia. In the 20th century besides Mennonites, conscientious objectors primarily included Evangelists, Baptists, Seventh-Day Adventists, Dukhobors and Tolstoyans. During the First World War, many were sentenced to deportation to Siberia.

On the other hand, one must note that in the Russian Empire there were nations and castes "militarized" to such a great extent that hardly could they have produced any objectors. Still most likely there were some. How they were treated, for instance, in Cossack hamlets, is described below by **Georgy Kokunko,** president of the Cossack Association of Moscow:

"You would like to know how a Cossack refusing to join the troops was treated in his home stanitsa (Cossack settlement)? Well, as the Cossack caste in Russia was militarized, with the military spirit instilled from young childhood, this problem was virtually non-existent. However, if such a thing did happen, one of two harsh punishments could be applied. The first such penalty was a flogging, which was conducted in the stanitsa guard-house by a special dispensation of the Cossack chieftain. Only the wife of the punished person was allowed to attend. As a rule, flogging was mild, inasmuch as the very fact of such punishment which the Cossack had to tolerate represented a great stigma. On the other hand, the said person could be stripped of the title of Cossack in which case he would be deprived of all privileges as regards land, orchards, pasturing and fishing. Amongst the Don Cossacks these were all common property and were duly allocated among the stanitsas.

"At present an effort is being made to recreate Cossack army units. However, the Moscow Association is against this, as this was initiated and supported by the quasi-official Union of Cossacks. The army is overly politicized, but we are not indifferent to whose interests Cossacks will protect. We advocate alternative Cossack service. This could be municipal service. We believe the stanitsa police could be relieved of duties, as from long ago the Cossacks ensured law and order in their lands. Secondly, this could be a game-warder service with mounted Cossacks armed with carabines protecting national preserves and parks. This coming summer the first such Cossack detachment of this order will be set up in Moscow, as suggested by the City Soviet."

Georgia presents one more illustration of a historically militarized nation. **Elgudja Tsiklauri** who heads the Georgian Falcons Legion, and who has made a study of the history of the Georgian army relates:

"Throughout its history, Georgia had to defend itself against external enemies and love for one's country and concern for its lot were instilled from early childhood. Whenever a boy was born into Georgian family, he would be presented with a dagger and a cross, and later when grown up with a sword. Consequently, there was never a case in Georgian history for anyone to refuse to fight. True, it was the custom in Georgia for only one member of a family to join the army.

"Though, according to folk

laws" has motivated young men of conscriptable age to prefer to join national quasi-military detachments as future national armies, and evade conscription into the All-Union Army. Until such relations are fully defined, such objectors will inevitably continue, and moreover enjoy the support of their respective peoples and local governments.

Thus, last April the Estonian Supreme Soviet repealed articles of the republican criminal code imposing penalties for draft evasion and subsequently adopted a law on an alternative labour service. In May the Armenian parliament issued a ruling suspending the draft and exempting from criminal liability soldiers from the republic who had gone AWOL. In September the Moldavian parliament suspended within the republic the operation of the appropriate USSR constitutional articles, along with the laws concerned with universal military obligations, and criminal liability for military crimes.

Last January 7, the USSR Defence Minister issued the notorious order to have paratroops used to focibly conscript recruits from Armenia, Georgia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Moldova and certain regions of the Ukraine.

Hugo Paas, consultant to the Defence and Border Protection Division of the Estonian Chancellory describes the situation in the republic, following the adoption of the alternative service law as follows:

"Though objection to serve may be of a religious or philosophical nature, for most young people in our republic the main reason they do not want to serve is the reluctance to wear the Soviet Army uniform.

"Today under respective law the special bodies set up under the local Soviets examine applications from conscripts seeking alternative service. However, should he disagree with its opinion, he may comlain to the republican commission on alternative service or take the matter to court. However, I do not know of any such cases.

"As of last January 1, 9,102 young men registered for alternative service. Of this number 6,617 are already discharging such duties. Another 2,144 have been deferred because of sickness, study or family, while 340 changed their minds.

"The local Soviets have been authorized to define the site of alternative labour service. Such service may be discharged in social security and health services or at building projects. Some Soviets enroll young men to protect public law and order, assist the police, or patrol the streets. The term of alternative service is 30 months and is 12 months for college graduates.

"Tentative calculations reveal that as many as three of every four young Estonians may prefer alternative service. The picture would have been different had Soviet Army conscription been modified several years ago and had the army been not exterritorial but territorial as I am sure that in that case fewer would prefer alternative service."

The **second group** of objectors is not very large and consists of young men associated with various religious sects and pacifists.

Finally, the **third group** consists of real draft dodgers rejecting every option for socially useful work and civic duties. Given the current legislation and current conscription procedure there does not seem anyone who would take the pains to clarify why this or that person does not want to join the army.

Jailing everyone is impossible

No state considering itself civilized and law-governed can forbid conscientious objection. A compromise must be sought, which may be either transition to a professional army or the introduction

The Cossacks as depicted by Repin: later they manned the elite troops of Russian Czars

legend, there were cases when Georgian fighting men fled from the battlefield, they could be numbered on the fingers of one hand, and in Georgian epics now play the villain's role."

After usurping power and doing away with the defiant Russian clergy, the Bolsheviks nevertheless paid note to the religious feelings of workers and peasants. Indeed, on January 4, 1919, at the very height of the Civil War, a decree was enacted allowing persons to be relieved of military service on religious grounds. It entitled the devout to select at discretion the work of hospital orderly, or discharge some other socially beneficial duties for a term equivalent to army service. There were even cases when one was fully exempted from forced labour.

"The said decree was observed with full revolutionary strictness with every violation of its ordinances coming up before plenary meetings of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Russian Communist Party. Thus, at its meeting of November 17, 1919 the Political Bureau of the Central Committee endorsed a letter that the Central Committee's Department of Organization and Instruction had sent the Tikhvin district Party Committee in the Cherepovets Government. It ran: "Esteemed comrades, proceeding from arguments lodged by Comrade Pivinkov, a member of your organization, to the effect that the Tikhvin district committee mobilized him for the fighting front, though when joining the party as sympathizer Comrade Pivinkov had declared that his religious convictions did not allow him to be used as a fighting man, the Central Committe, comrades, believes such mobilization wrong and rules that Comrade Pivinkov be recalled from his fighting unit and transferred to an ambulance detachment, where he could be appropriately employed."

After Britain in 1916 and Denmark in 1917 Soviet Russia was among the first to recognize the right of its citizens to object to military service.

True, as the country regressed towards the sinister "middle ages" of the 1930s, the thus declared right was increasingly regarded as an unpardonable luxury in the context of the sharpening class struggle. Stalin's Law of September 1, 1939, as to universal military obligations, abolished the "misunderstanding" of the first post-Revolution years.

However, there have always been people who cannot bear arms out of personal conviction. From some passages in statements that official persons have issued it may be deduced that the number of objectors during the so-called chapter of "stagnation" reached an annual thousand of whom a quarter were arraigned for trial.

of an alternative civic service. However, as the first option does not seem attainable within the foreseeable future, the only realistic alternative is to introduce a civic alternative to military service.

Until lately, spokesmen for the Defence Ministry assured us that, first, there was no special need for such a service, and second, a service of this order already existed in practice in the form of the construction battalions. Thus, religious sectarians are at times individually allowed to serve their term in military construction units without bearing arms.

Last November the USSR Supreme Soviet Committee for Youth Affairs introduced a bill on "The Fundamentals of USSR and Union Republic Legislation for Alternative Service." If adopted, it will mean that the option for alternative service will depend on the ruling of a special body. However, conscientious objection is a subjective thing that no body can really clarify.

A paragraph envisaging service outside of the Armed Forces is incorporated also in the draft of a new USSR law on universal military obligations which the Defence Ministry has worked out. It is proposed that the term of such service be one and a half times more than the usual term and that choice be defined on the basis of personal examination. It is proposed that local government undertake selection: however no chance of complaining against decisions is envisaged.

"No" to local construction battalions!

A bill dealing with the fundamentals of alternative service has been drafted in this country. In the following interview **Victor Minin,** a USSR People's Deputy, and **Mikhail Timofeyev,** a cadet at the Frunze Military Political Academy, illustrate it.

New Times. Please describe your concept of alternative service.

M.Timofeyev. We believe in a universal civic service. Society takes care of the child from birth. However, there comes a time when the young man must render his due to society. Military service, the safeguarding of law and order, environmental protection, and social aid are all of equal importance to society.

V. Minin. We need this law to give the young man an option. However, I think it relates only to a small number, as most prefer army service.

NT. Can our state provide enough jobs for all preferring alternative service?

M.T. The local Soviets are to set up commissions of people with a good idea of the nature of local problems. In fact, the very principle of providing jobs in the alternative service will be local.

V.M. The Soviet Army does not permit the soldier to serve where he lives. However, as regards the alternative service that will not do, as it creates extra residential difficulties and, moreover, lowers the level of control.

Yet there are places where because of already existing unemployment, it will not be possible to provide additional jobs in the alternative service. Nevertheless, the problem can be resolved. Thus the Atomstroimash organization has already agreed to provide jobs for young men from the Urals and the Central Asian republics. Meanwhile, in Russia itself there are depopulated areas which the alternative service could help to bring back to life again.

NT. Now young men in the alternative service will need to be paid for their work, as otherwise that will be reminiscent of slave labour. So, where will this money come from?

M.T. First, there are facilities and public utilities that have these funds, and, second, there are many various foundations and charitable institutions whose funds currently go to no particular purpose. If these resources are reallocated, it will then be possible at least partly to pay for work in the alternative service.

NT. Do you expect any pitfalls for your project?

V.M. Local governments have a stake in an alternative service; however, exclusively as local construction battalions, and therein lies the worst danger. After all, alternative service should, apart from everything else, help to develop the young man, gear him up for a future and promote his interests. Such should be the picture if we want the state to conduct a normal youth policy.

M.T. Our project came up for discussion in the USSR Supreme Soviet Committee on Legislation. However, doubt was voiced as to whether the Defence Ministry could ensure a full conscription should everyone prefer alternative service. It was also wondered whether there would be enough money and whether we would not thus cause the army to disintegrate. On the other hand, the USSR State Committee for Labour and Social Affairs (Goskomtrud) sought thereby to provide enough personnel for noxious industries. We had to explain that that contravenes all norms and concepts of human rights. Still, our project was accepted as a starting point and most likely will shortly be tabled for discussion at a USSR Supreme Soviet session.

It is a fact that even in this country ex-

The choice around the world

Country	Military service	Alternative service
Belgium	12 months inside Belgium, or 10 months in Germany; voluntary extension for 6 months	12 months without bearing arms or service in social establishments: 20 months in socio-cultural institutions or 24 months of civic aid
Denmark	9 months	11 months
Greece	24 months if no children; 18 months if having one child; 12 months if having 2; 6 if having 3	Double the term in auxiliary units
Italy	12 months in ground forces or 14-15 months in the navy	20 months without bearing arms as policeman or carabineer or in a public institution
Poland	24 months in ground forces, 36 in the navy	36 months of alternative service exclusively for reasons of conscience
Hungary	18 months and 9 months for college graduates	28 months of civic service

Extracted from reference of the USSR Supreme Soviet Youth Affairs Committee

perience has been accumulated in creating jobs and paying for work in an alternative service. Back in the mid-1920s the Council of People's Commissars adopted Instruction No. 422 as to procedures for providing jobs for conscientious objectors, which offers a very good blueprint.

NT. Insofar as many republics have already enacted legislation on alternative service, could you not borrow from their experience?

V.M. It is to be regretted that many of the republics simply sought thereby to keep their young men at home or pursued other political ambitions. Experience has demonstrated that when there is no control here, men occupied in the alternative service stop discharging obligations and loaf. Which is all more reminiscent of a sham alternative service.

NT. How are the places for such service to be defined?

M.T. There are two approaches here. One is to have the young man in question examined, another is to have him registered and that is what we prefer, as the first option is behind the times. The young man must prove that he really cannot serve in the army. But how should this be done in practice? Is the appropriate certificate from a priest sufficient? However, when the young man registers, the commission discussing his problem can decide where he would be of better use. Of course, he may complain against the said decision by filing a grievance with the higher authorities. However, let me note that we have merely proposed the fundamentals, it is for each republic to decide.

Interviewer: Irina Lagunina

It is not the uniform that makes one a man

The Germans, who for centuries were spoonfed militaristic ideals, cannot imagine themselves without conscientious objectors nowadays

The paralyzed usually ekes out his days in a refuge for the elderly among similar cripples. Not so in Germany. Ever since alternative service was introduced, the seriously sick and incurable may stay at home and lead an almost normal life, as each patient is now serviced by five conscientious objectors who cook for him, read morning papers for him, take him out for walks or to the movies, to a chess club, or to a meeting of the association of people of disability, where during a vote they raise their hands or take notes as he tells them. They also systematically bathe him and empty his bedpan. This is a rather unpleasant and heavy job, for which professional nurses are very well paid. However, hospitals, clinics and old people's homes never had enough staff before. Not so nowadays, as unlike medical personnel with their cynical indifference, the young men in the alternative service gladly and compassionately undertake this work. They objected to army service not because they wanted to stay at home and dodge army barrack privations, but out of religious and other considerations. As a matter of fact, alternative service is of a term that is one and a half times longer than army service and is manifestly more arduous.

There is a special commission to enforce unbiassed control. It registers every single violation of discipline and shirking, which may even entail criminal liability. However, that does not occur.

There was a time when such young men were ostracized. However, today it is well realized that without these 100,000 young men who are prepared to do for their country what others shun, the social and health services would fall apart and huge additional budgetary allocations would be needed.

Young men of the alternative service looking after an invalid

Reproduced from Der Spiegel (Germany)

But what about the army itself? It is to be noted that the Bundeswehr's combat potential is not questioned either by Germany's potential opponents or by its NATO allies, even though some 12 percent of the conscripted choose alternative service. Though of course the Bonn defence department would like to have as many recruits as possible, even military officials realize that the growing number of conscientious objectors is symptomatic of the reassessment of values in German society, which for the first time in its history has come to view civic service every bit as important as military service. Germans no longer consider a man a man only after he has borne arms and has served in the army for several years.

The German defence department admits that the only alternative is to glamourize military service. This means not only good training during the year of service, but mostly the ousting of the traditional army-barracks style and the arbitrary power of the noncoms.

The right not to bear arms is laid down in the 1949 Constitution. Initially, the military service act, that was endorsed in the mid-1950s, implied that pacifists and the devout would serve the due term of service, however without bearing arms and not in a regular unit. It soon came to be, though, that objectors were regarded on a level with all else, with commanding officers not recognizing their rights. Then the first law on alternative service was adopted. Any young man alleging that his convictions did not allow him to wear a uniform and fire at his fellows had to be interviewed by a harsh commission.

Dr. Klaus Steinwender, for a long time head of the alternative service sub-division at the Ministry for Youth, Family, Women and Health Affairs says that this commission rejected about half of the conscientious objectors. Those who defied its rulings were arraigned with only a few able to get the courts to acknowledge their right. Even the Church found this system repugnant, regarding these commissions as inquisitorial.

Enacted in 1984 was a new law, which Dr. Steinwender calls "revolutionary." Now a written application from the young conscientious objector is sufficient. Of course, it must be well substantiated as the desire simply to stay at home is not enough. However, should the young man adequately define his religious or other convictions, his request will be gratified without interview or check.

Vitaly Shuvalov

The village commune in Russia in retrospect

Leonid Alayev

Those who call for a return to the "traditional primordial Russian commune" are simply ignorant of our history

As distinct from legal ignorance which does not relieve a wrongdoer of liability for his offence, ignorance of history seems to be regarded in this country as a valid enough excuse for presenting no arguments in favour of new socio-economic programmes. Ignorance of the history of the village commune and a vague notion of what it was all about may cost us dearly for the second time in the history of Russia.

In the middle of the last century, Narodniks (Russian Populists) came to regard the village commune as the epitome of "their" socialism; the result was a long period of futile action which started with attempts to "awaken the people" and ended with terrorism. At the end of 1990, when the issue of Russia's future came up again, the President of the USSR, who is opposed to private property ownership, spoke highly of the traditional Russian village commune. The writer Boris Mozhayev supported him by interjecting: "Incidentally, the Russian village commune is older than Russian statehood." That happened within a day of Ivan Silayev's urging the Congress of People's Deputies of Russian Federation to carry on the line taken by Pyotr Stolypin who had sought to abolish the commune and "to release the capable and hard-working Russian peasant, that is the salt of the earth, from its grip." And so, we are still divided on the issue of the role played by the village commune in Russia – some think it outdated and progress-retarding, and others – traditional (meaning "deeply rooted," "primordial").

Thus spoke the Baron

Narodniks can be excused their romantic views because in the 1840s when Baron August von Haxthausen of Prussia discovered the commune on the landed gentlemen's country estates in Central Russia, its history was totally unknown. But no sooner had it been discovered than scientists (Narodniks and Slavophils for the most part) got down to study it and promptly (by the eighties and the nineties of the last century) found out that there was nothing primordial in the Russian village commune, that its "collectivism" stemmed from serfdom and shortage of arable land, and that the form of that "collectivism" (an equal sharing of the land among the commune members) was directly connected with the poll-tax. That came as a shock – a beneficial one which stimulated the progress of Russian science.

And so everything began with Baron von Haxthausen. Another aspect of Russian reality was discovered by a foreigner, as had often been the case before. The Russians would never have guessed on their own that they conversed in prose. Alexandra Yefimenko, the well-known 19th-century student of folk customs, wrote the following in this connection: "We Russians have long been alleged to draw whatever knowledge we have from German books. Admittedly, I am rather embarrassed about the fact that, unlike my opponents, I make my own conclusions rather than quote a German source."

Thanks to the German, our dyed-in-the-wool patriots of those times found the elementary cell of "Slav spirit" they needed to substantiate the distinctiveness of the Russian people and their exclusive predestination. As for revolutionaries, they found their much-coveted socialism right underfoot, figuratively speaking. It only remained to purge it of autocratic and other impurities. I made no difference to Slavophils and Narodniks that the commune had existed elsewhere in Europe as well. "Ours" was much more democratic and egalitarian – after all, land was regularly redistributed among commune members to ensure that everyone had a fair slice of the cake. It felt good to know that although the "commune spirit" was not altogether unknown to other nations, it had really come into its own and struck the deepest roots in Russia. Our patriots preferred to ignore the fact that although land tenure was communal, land ownership was not – the land belonged to the "lord of the manor." At first, nobody identified the commune with serfdom.

Boris Chicherin's revelations had the effect of a bomb explosion, therefore. The scientist maintained that the commune based on the principle of regular land redistribution among its members, i.e., collectivization process, was a relatively new phenomenon – and produced historical evidence in support of this view.

Chicherin's realistic approach was not accepted by the Russian scientific community. Neither was it given justice by Marx who was busy at that time drawing up – under the influence of the German scientist Georg Maurer, the founder of the "commune theory" – a logically well-balanced but a historical theory of gradual disintegration of communal landownership.

In the meantime, the mole of history kept digging. The works by Alexander Kaufman on the communes of Russian settlers in Siberia and by Alexandra Yefimenko on the villages of Northern Russia were of special importance. They had to do

Prof. **Leonid Alayev,** D.Sc. (History), editor-in-Chief, *Vostok* magazine. The author of over 80 works on the history of the rural commune in India.

with the parts of Russia where serfdom had never existed and where, consequently, one could expect to find the original sources of "communal spirit." It turned out, however, that neither the Russian settlers in Siberia who had broken out of the commune, nor the Ukrainian ones who had no such communes at home wanted communal landownership; they simply grabbed hold of as much land as they could. The reason why the Russians and the Ukrainians later set limits on each other's land property, "equalized" their holdings from time to time and then went over to per-capita sharing lay chiefly in arable land shortage.

There is still more reason to look for the sources of everything genuinely Russian, the commune included, in the North. Until quite recently, there existed in the Arkhangelsk and Vologda regions the practice of sharing land among villagers. This gave Alexandra Yefimenko the idea that collectivism was "in the Russian people's blood," and she tried to convince sceptics of that. Later it became clear, however, that the practice went back to the family farming days, i.e., that "shared" land tenure stemmed from private ownership. Besides, this there is a certain difference between shared and communal forms of landownership.

Wrote Alexandra Yefimenko: "Out of my intense admiration for country folk and their communes, I plunged into the archives for two years in search of first-hand information which would add to my knowledge of the subject... Two years later I surfaced again – minus, alas, my once profound and firm conviction that the commune was a primordial form of our landownership; I found out for certain that the comune was a product of more recent times, that it marked, on the one hand, the concluding stage of a long historical process and, on the other, was a result of outside influence."

Russian village... TASS photo

Non-Marxist means alien

Perhaps the fullest account of the history of the Russian village commune is to be found in Nikolai Palov-Silvansky's monograph *Feudalism in Russian Appanage Principalities* which came out after the author's death, in 1910. By that time, it was already clear to all that the Russian "commune" was a survival of feudalism, that peasants had to be released from communal fetters. So far as it destroyed the commune, Pyotr Stolypin's reform met with no opposition from the left.

Russian Marxists were naturally familiar with the research done into this problem. In 1905, Georgy Plekhanov remarked, in the second edition of his book *Our Differences,* first published in 1885: "At that time, the Russian village commune's having nothing to do with primitive communism was still to be finally established. Now this is beyond doubt." Let me also refer to Leonid who commands great authority with those "opposed to private property ownership." According to Lenin, "the notorious commune" was a medieval partition which disunited peasants; he reckoned the "fiscal commune" among the relics of serfdom.

In Soviet literature, all that was anathemized or, at best, passed over in silence. Lenin's pronouncements on the commune were relegated to oblivion, while the views of Nikolai Pavlov-Silvansky, Ivan Luchitsky and others were described as "obviously wrong," as a result of "misunderstanding" and "class narrow-mindedness." Drawing a veil over those views was regarded as the best way to deal with them.

To write the truth about the Russian village commune meant to be anti-Marxist. Who wanted that truth then? It turned out that the German commune did not quite fit into the Marxist notion of it, but in Germany, unlike Russia, the commune issue was a strictly historical one which made much less difference to Germans than it did to Russians. In Russia, as we see, the commune problem has lost none of its topicality to this day. The whole trouble is that the Soviet public is ignorant of its country's social history because our historians made no effort to replace a mythological "theoretical" village commune with a real one.

Landowners' administration

In Kievan Rus, there was a kind of primary commune called *verv* which had self-government, common plots of arable land, and all its members were bound by mutual responsibility. Even as early as that there was hardly such thing as communal land tenure. In the late 12th century, the verv fell apart and receded into the past, and Rus' economic and political centre shifted northwards. The first migrants moved to the north in clans, tribes and "gangs." Thence the power of a group over the area occupied by what was to become a commune. However, families set up separate farmsteads and had land doled out among them. Quite a few of the "villages" mentioned in the registers of the 15th-16th centuries were actually large farmyards. Free peasants' land holdings were known as "patrimonies," just as those owned by the nobility. Accordingly, the two classes had identical rights of succession, alienation, etc.

Over the same centuries, villages were

gradually absorbed by estates. Lords of the manor established their administrative bodies and, for convenience, forced the peasants to move from their small holdings to large villages. (A striking and tragical analogy can be drawn between that and the recent practice of liquidating "hopeless" villages!). The villages which belonged to the same lord of the manor were managed by the lord-appointed headman and had the "right" to discuss, at their get-togethers, the best ways to do their "corvee" and to pay their quit-rent. The border of the commune some times cut a village in two and stretched out to include villages tens of kilometres away to delimit the given landowner's property. Such borders go to show that the new commune was an entirely artificial formation which had nothing to do with Slavic traditions. Such a commune was under the landowner's full control, and self-management was out of the question.

The practice of land reallotment began on privately-owned holdings (estates) because landowners wanted to bring more order and system into tenure, to make poll-taxes commensurate with every serf's work capacity. While the landowner wanted each peasant family to have the largest possible plot so as to get more out of it accordingly, the peasant sought to keep the plot to a minimum in order to lighten the tax burden. The methods of land allotment varied at first, but, since the early 18th century land was divided in equal shares among the males of the "commune" irrespective of their age.

It was only since late in the 18th century, i.e., since the reign of Catherine II, that such communal land tenure came to predominate in Central Russia. In the outlying regions (the Ukraine, the Don, the Kuban, the Caucasus, the North and Siberia) the per-male land allotment was introduced later still, in the 19th century. As already mentioned, that was part of the imperial authorities' effort to bring more system into agrarian practices.

The abolition of serfdom in 1861 certainly breathed new life into the peasant communes of Central Russia – the land was handed over not to individual peasants, but to their communes. Unexpectedly for itself, the commune became a landowner in its own right, which hardly improved the peasants' lot any: as before, none of them had a chance of striking out on his own, and their independence was restricted in every way. That kind of a commune was castigated by Lenin and encroached upon by Stolypin.

Drawing by Igor Shein

Make the commune a collective farm

The October Revolution revealed that the past was extremely tenacious of life in the think of the people. It threw the nation back to primordial egalitarianism, autocracy and medieval ruthlessness. The commune "staged a comeback," too – the land, formerly owned by the nobility, was doled out again, this time among men and women. This might appear, at a first glance, to be an indication of women having been granted equal rights along with men. It will be recalled, however, that the discriminatory practice of counting the serf population in terms of male peasants (and of sharing out the land accordingly), introduced by Peter I, ended with the abolition of the poll-tax. Had the Bolsheviks taken the true measure of the commune at the time, they wouldn't have destroyed it but would have proclaimed it to be the collective farm and adapted it to socialist ideology and made it a means of ruthless exploitation. That, however, presupposed too many compromises such as admitting that Narodniks had been partially rights; putting up with private farms and with the inevitable domination of the "kulaks" (rich peasants) in the village; giving up the dogma of large integrated farms being necessarily more advanced than small family ones. Theoretically, socialism can be built by using the commune as a means of "levelling" the farms through appropriating the wealthier ones' "surpluses" from time to time, and of making the village pay for industrialization. That would have been a tough line, but not as ruthless as the one actually taken. Even the theoretical likelihood of such a road to socialism is questionable, however, because Soviet peasantry was less stratified than it had been before 1917, and such a squeeze would be ruinous to it. Actually, there is no changing history. The Bolsheviks were by no means prepared to change their views for the sake of keeping the losses sustained by Russia to a minimum. One can even say that they intuitively acted in a straightforward way in restoring the spirit rather than the form of the Russian peasant commune. A peasant who has neither private property nor a sense of being in control is easier to manipulate. The devaluation of land makes it possible to impose the latter on the peasant (i.e., to keep increasing, without any justification, the area to be ploughed up). The apportionment of taxes among the "communes" (i.e., collective farms) rather than among individual peasants brings back the levelling characteristic of the old commune. The result is the revival of the "commune spirit" marked by inertia, unambitiousness and envy of those even slightly better off. Therefore, the analogy between Pyotr Stolypin's and Ivan Silayev's reforms suggests itself, what's more – is strongly pronounced. There is no doubt that the "commune spirit" will oppose the current reform, as it did the previous one, but it should be borne in mind that this "spirit" has its roots not in our national traditions, but in serfdom.

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FROM THE XXth CENTURY POLITICAL THOUGHT

Introduced by *New Times* analyst **Rostislav Zolotaryov**

What follows is not actually a manuscript but a speech by the prominent Russian historian and politician Pavel Nikolayevich Milyukov. The speech was never delivered because its author, a member of the Duma (parliament) and a leader of the opposition, was not given the floor in Tavrichesky Palace where the deputies held their sessions. Nevertheless, he parried his right-wing opponents in an article which was given the form of a parliament speech. Later, the article appeared in the press and was brought out in book form.

Everything began in January 1908 when several right- and extreme right-wing members of the Duma pounced on the opposition and on Milyukov personally, accusing them of "non-patriotism." Following a broadside at the liberals, the session was closed in a hurry. Milyukov never got the floor, and the opposition was barred from several Duma commissions – the defence and security ones, in particular. Such was the conservatives' reaction to certain, most carefully worded, pronouncements made by the opposition (representatives of the Constitutional Democratic Party included) concerning foreign and defence policy, as well as domestic problems connected with the growing national self-awareness in various parts of the Empire and in Russia proper...

In response to that, the opposition was subjected to obstruction in the Duma. The conservatives vociferated nonstop, one after another, about Russia's special mission, about the unbreakable unity of the army and the nation, about "true patriotism" and about the "destructive activity of alien elements" (the echo of those patriotic vociferations has not died down to this day). In the end, the opposition was accused of "eroding the great Empire" and "lacking a sense of love for their Motherland."

Incidentally, many right-of-centre politicians and moderate conservatives were by no means inclined to support the "superpatriotic" majority; those who did were motivated by disagreement with the opposition on a number of practical issues. Pyotr Arkadyevich Stolypin, the last person to be suspected of "non-patriotism," lent an attentive ear to the opposition's recommendations. While upholding a hard line in defence policy, he largely shared the CDP's views. He sharply objected to irrational military spending and insisted that more money go to improving servicemen's living conditions and diet (let me remind the reader that a private soldier's daily ration included about 400 grams of beef).

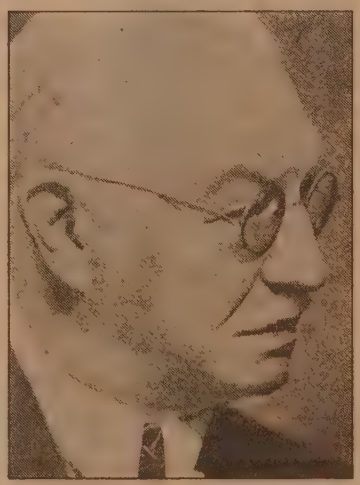
In the light of the above, it might be of interest to follow the arguments put forward by the most prominent representative of the party which Stolypin, while disagreeing with it in many respects, referred to as "the brain of the nation" and the patriotism of which he never called in question...

Here is a slightly abridged text of Pavel Milyukov's "undelivered speech" which we have reproduced from a book published in Petersburg in 1908. The text has been prepared for publication by Andrei Yedemsky, Cand. Sc. (History).

What is patriotism?

Pavel Milyukov (1859–1943)

The accusation brought against me, in particular, and against the opposition in general, provided the grounds for expelling the entire opposition from the state defence commission. We are accused of being unpatriotic, or insufficiently patriotic, no less. It is true that some speakers tried to take a more objective view of the question ad refrained from speculations over "what parties had more love for Russia" and even admitted that all of them were equally devoted to it...



I am not going to attempt to draw a distinction between true and sham patriots. However, the question of what is true *patriotism* and what isn't requires a clear-cut answer...

The whole trouble is that when it comes to patriotism, the basic sense of patriotism gets mixed up with its various manifestations and applications. As a result, any action popularly described as "unpatriotic" comes under fire as a matter of course. Therein lies the strength of such accusations – and their weakness on closer inspection.

An elementarty sense of patriotism is quite naturally shared by all normal individuals. For the very reason of it being organic and universal, this sense is beyond praise or censure as such: from the ethical standpoint, it is neutral. However, any healthy and normal sense can be put to good or evil use; so it is the forms this sense takes that can be subject to moral judgement. Great feats of self-sacrifice are made in the name of patriotism; patriotism inspires people to die for their country; on the other hand, many acts committed under the banner of patriotism can be pronounced, without a moment's hesitation, criminal from the viewpoint of individual morality. Patriotism means not only love for our common "single and indivisible" homeland; it can also underlie the feeling of hatred, the feeling of hostility between the nationalities and social classes found in this common homeland. In the name of patriotism, people are working for better living conditions in our native land, for more efficient social services, for progressive legislation, for higher living standards; also in the name of patriotism, efforts are being made to preserve the obsolete "traditional" way of life and to defend group interests. In the name of patriotism, some people call for "not washing dirty linen in public," and others seek to show our

"festering wounds" for all the world to see; some demand freedom to discuss our social and national faults, and others, that these faults be concealed. In a word, some stick to the elementary, almost zoological feeling which stems from the national instinct of self-preservation and which makes their patriotism blind. Others believe that the best way of making their self-preservation instinct work is to take the blinders off their patriotism.

Many authors describe patrtiotism as collective egoism. This definition justifies patriotism and sets natural limits to it. This is a kind of egoism *extended* from an individual to a group. In this sense, patriotism gives a certain scope to altruism and self-sacrifice, though it is by no means identical to these feelings as such. By definition, *egoism,* even though extended to a group, sets certain limits to the development of moral sentiments and, what's worse, is incapable of identifying itself with the patriotism of the rival group. What is regarded as permissible and praiseworthy in our *own* "patriotism" makes us indignant about our neighbours'. In this way, national morality, unrefined and unrestricted, may easily degenerate into the advocacy of man-hatred, enslavement and extermination. Just think how many evil deeds have been committed behind the façade of such "patriotism"!

By holding forth about our special predestination and concealing "skeletons" in our "closet" we shall not secure a place for ourselves in the family of modern mankind

Presumably, even among my political opponents there must be people capable of realizing the fact that humaneness and humanity take precedence over patriotism and nationality. There are many clergymen sitting on right-wing benches. I know that fanatical adherents to blind nationalism have always been prepared to sanctify national instinct with religion. But each time religion was made the basis of patriotism, it always ennobled the latter because faith humanized nationalism to a certain extent. As far as our Russian nationalism is concerned, old Slavophilism is a case in point – it proceeded exactly from the idea that local problems should be dealt with in a global, all-Christian context. Each time nationalism came to be dominated by parochial or misanthropic instincts, it lost its religious muscle.

However, I do not invite all my opponents to ascend to the height of a universally religious world outlook. I know that up there, at those heights, the sense of patriotism and nationality may be overshadowed by the absolute criterion of human morality. This viewpoint has been adopted by our greatest writer as it should be adopted by any abstract moralist. I do not go that far, and I quite accept national egoism so long as it is a natural and healthy expression of the national organism's sense of integrity and instinct of self-preservation. Therefore, the accusations of being anti-state and of encouraging centrifugal tendencies, made against us by our opponents, are misdirected. I am convinced, however, that even in these narrow interests of local self-preservation, in the interests of "egoistical" patriotism, the awareness of solidarity with the rest of mankind should be cultivated in every way rather than be suppressed. Modern means of transportation and international communication have made the world as small a place as the Mediterranean used to be in ancient times. Today mankind is not the supreme moral postulate or an abstract notion. Neither is "world politics" merely a highfaluting phrase or something reserved for select nations only. Some ten or twenty years ago, things were different, perhaps, and one could still cling to old ideas of strict nation seclusion. Today such seclusion is impossible, and any national mentality leading to it is simply pernicious and ruinous. National exlusiveness has always bred a feeling of mistrust among nations, and mistrust led to mutual hostility and international catastrophes... That was a policy of concealment and deceit, a policy of international falsehood and broken promises. Inside the country, it was accompanied by a policy of kindling ethnic feuds. And then we were told, even more emphatically than is the case now, that we should not wash dirty linen in public, strip ourselves naked, etc.

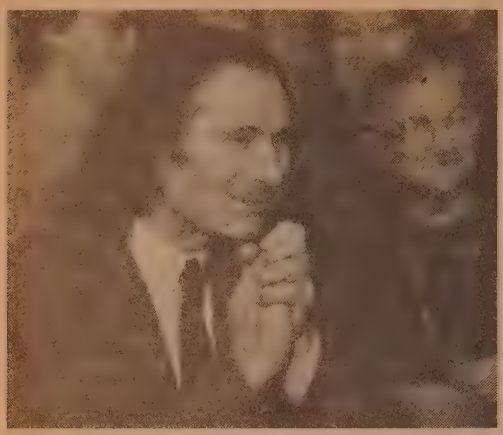
...Thus interpreted, "patriotism" has weakened rather than strengthened Russia's position in its international relations. We take an entirely different view of patriotism. We are of the opinion that by preaching national exlusiveness and concealing "skeletons in the closet," it is impossible to pave the way for normal relations in the closely-knit family that is modern mankind. Dirty linen must be washed clean, whether in public or in private, and nakedness should be kept in such a state as to please rather than offend the eye.

Pyotr Chaadayev, the great Russian patriot whom the ancestors of our present opponents pronounced mad for his patriotism, said three quarters of a century ago that he wanted to love his country with his eyes open, and to love it for something positive. These words can be used by way of the answer to deputy Prince Urusov who doubts the possibility of combining criticism with love for Russia. Chaadayev's ruthless criticism... stemmed from love; he had profound faith in the future of the nation, the present and past of which he had disparaged. Love and faith are infectious: they attract sympathies, while misanthropy is always repulsive.

Sympathies can be attracted on one condition, though: you must find a common language – figuratively as well as literally – with those you are addressing. There are ideas and views accepted in civilized nations, just as a certain style of dress and a certain manner of conduct are accepted in educated society. Those incapable of such conduct doom themselves to being disliked in, and barred from, such society. Let us now ask ourselves who is more likely to be accepted in the international civilized community: a pogrom maker or a champion of political freedom and social equality?

He who scrapes dirt off his motherland's magnificent body does that out of love, not out of spite... So it is no use looking for "Noah," whose nakedness I have dared to expose, in the streets of a Russian village. He is more likely to be found in the privacy of a club lounge... And let those offended by my criticism not shout about offence done to *Russia*...

■



The celebrated Soviet composer **Alfred Schnitke,** first invited out of the Soviet Union by the Berlin College of Sciences, unexpectedly discovered new opportunities for himself. Over the year he worked productively and peacefully, undistracted by the problems and trifles of everyday living. This college presents a home for creative work, which, instituted by a public foundation, is financed by means of deductions from the national budget and of donations from industrialist sponsors. While there Schnitke collaborated with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, one of the world's finest.

Music lovers have already appreciated the results. Thus given at the West Berlin Philharmonic was Schnitke's Concerto for Viola and Orchestra, while presented at the Hall of Chamber Music a recital of his hymns. Note that Schnitke not only collaborated with German musicians but also introduced some valuable proposals. Thus College Rector Wolf Lepenese, says: "We regard further collaboration with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra as a fascinating prospect and from now on will regard this as a laboratory for composers from all over the world to whom we may grant scholarships."
G.D.Schilling

***

U Ba Thaw, a 62-year-old writer and a leading member of the National League for Democracy, a legal political party in Myanma, is serving a 20-year hard labour sentence.

He is understood to have been arrested early in 1989. A former naval officer, he is one of Mayanma's best known novelists, telling about the navy. And his most recent book is about a shipwreck which took place over 30 years ago. The tribunal charged U Ba Thaw with inciting members of the armed forces to join the democratic movement in the country. Defendants brought before military tribunals are stripped of their rights, the tribunals refuse to call "unnecessary" witnesses. The decision of the military tribunal is final. No appeal against the sentence is allowed.

According to "Amnesty International" U Ba Thaw is being held in solitary confinement. The writer is sick and it is not known whether he is receiving medical treatment.

It looks like Myanma will for a long time miss its best known writer, and the country's Writers' Union – its president.

***

This century's mass reprisals against national minorities took place not only in the Soviet Union, but also in the United States. But the US takes a different approach to the question of exonerating exiles. **Yosiko Imamoto,** a 93-year old American of Japanese origin, realized this through her own experience.

Her family moved to the United States in 1918. In 1942, when the war with Japan began,

Yosiko was arrested by three FBI men and sent to a special concentration camp for people of Japanese descent. She was one of the 120 thosand American Japanese kept in concentration camps. Imamoto was separated from her four daughters and later from her husband, who was sent to another camp. They were reunited only in 1944 and later that year they were set free. Though they had no money and no possibility to find a job, they were accepted as servants in the house of a doctor in Washington. But eight years later they decided to return home to California only to find a completely deserted and destroyed house.

It's hard to be a journalist

Three months in prison and a fine of 12 thousand marks – this may be the price of the photograph taken by 41-year-old **Sebastian Knauer,** a former reporter of the Hamburg magazine *Stern* at the Geneva hotel Beau Rivage on October 11, 1987. That day his professional feeling told him where to look for sensation. He arrived at the hotel before the police and his rival journalists, and in suite 317 found the dead prime-minister of Schleswig-Holstein, Uwe Barschel. That photograph was carried by many newspapers and magazines, including *New Times.*

Knauer says he did not hesitate to take the photograph. "The main goal of a journalist," he says, "is to find out the reason for this or that event and provide readers with information and facts." However, a court in Geneva regarded Knauer's actions as invasion of privacy, though the defence believes that a person's private life ends with his death. However, the "Do not disturb" sign hung on the handle of the hotel suite, and that influenced the court's final decision. In addition, the family of the deceased believe that the photo was used by Barschel's opponents to fan a political scandal. But the decision of the Geneva court could be reversed by the higher instances.

Meamwhile, Knauer is working for *Der Spiegel* and is coolly awaiting the outcome of the trial. He thinks that such an episode is normal in the work of a journalist engaged in investigating crimes. His former collegues at *Stern* are sorry that the talented reporter has left for *Der Spiegel,* but Knauer says that it offered him more.

If he comes up against a similar case again, Knauer says that he will act "according to the circumstances."

At present, she and another 60 thousand Japanese interned during World War II received 20 thousand dollars each from the American government. But Imamoto was much happier to receive a letter from President Bush, attached to the check. The president apologized to Imamoto for the actions of the American government in the 1940s and admitted that "grave injustice had been done to American Japanese during World War II.

* * *

Stelian Tanase, Editor-in-Chief of the Romanian weekly "22", of the oppositional to the Romanian government Group for Social Dialogue, has resigned. He also left the Group. The most popular dissident of the Ceausescu era explained his unexpected decision in the following way: "The group never managed to become a 'group', neither did it manage to conduct a 'dialogue,' let alone a 'social dialogue.' Its members have been and remain nothing but a sum of separate personalities of a high intellectual level." He is now among the founders of a new weekly called *Acum*.

During a marathon-meeting in the University Square last June, Tanase felt that he could no longer remain in the ranks of the "official" opposition. He said that at that moment he realized that the members of the group had benefited more from their membership than the Romanian people from the group's work and that the group was concerned about the intellectual elite, which included some two thousand people at most, rather than about the Romanian people.

Having become one of the founders of the new weekly *Acum*, Tanase said: "Those who were scared to death in December 1989, have firmly established themselves in power. And those who will fail to receive a leading post will quickly become 'private entrepreneurs.' Our former masters are becoming our new masters, since they will hold economic power in their hands. Crowds of generals and colonels, directors and party secretaries rushed into business, turning from 'comrades' into 'sirs.'"

* * *

Sixty-eight-year-old mayor of Vatican Archbishop **Paul Marcinkus** has decided to resign and return home to the United States after 40 years he spent in Vatican. As head of the Vatican Bank, he was implicated in the 1982 collapse of Italy's Banco Ambrosiano. Italian police sought his arrest on criminal charges. A papal commission cleared him, and an Italian court threw out the charges against him. Now the Archbishop has resigned as chief of the city-state and said he would return home to the United States. But he will shun his native Chicago and head for warmer climes. "After 40 years in Rome, your blood thins out," he says.

Two generals in the desert

All the actions of the multinational forces in the Gulf are connected with the names of two American generals – 56-year-old **Norman Schwarzkopf** and 54-year-old **Charles Horner.**

Immediately following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, Schwarzkopf was made head of operation "Desert Shield". According to press reports, the general was especially scrupulously engaged in deploying troops arriving in Saudi Arabia and organizing decent living conditions for them. He headed operation "Desert Storm" beginning on January 16. His father, Norman Schwarzkopf Sr. was a general, too. In the 1930s he headed the police in New Jersey and conducted the investigation of the kidnapping of the son of the country's national hero, pilot Charles Lindbergh, and in the 1940s he commanded the police of the Shah of Iran. In 1956 Norman Jr. graduated West Point and went to serve in Alaska. He then took part in combat operations in Vietnam, where he was wounded twice. He worked out the plan for American invasion of Grenada and was deputy-commander of that operation code-named "Urgent Fury". The general says that he is learning from his own mistakes, although the command do not share his view. He said that he saw quite a few deaths and realized that war had to be conducted resolutely and finished quickly.

Prior to the beginning of combat operations in the Gulf the name of Charles Horner was practically never mentioned in the press. But it is he who commanded 1800 American, and 435 British, French, Italian, Saudi Arabian and Kuwaiti militlary aircraft. The head of the Military Air Force of the US Armed Forces Central Command, Horner led the work on the plans of war in the air against Iraq. The general commanded an excellent knowledge of the theatre of war, since for the prior four years he was head of American avation in the Middle East, both at US military bases in the region and military aircraft in the Gulf. He often flew around the Saudi desert and the Gulf in the cabin of a fighter plane. He is interested in the region's history and collects books about the Arab world.

Horner joined the Air Force in 1958. He spent 4,500 hours in the air and made 111 sorties during the Vietnam war. His close associates say that the General does not like to scold his subordinates. The only exception was the August meeting in Saudi Arabia, when following a series of accidents during trial sorties Horner bawled out subdivision commanders. Horner tried not to attract anyone's attention. Asked by a journalist to describe himself, he said: "I have absolutely no features of an outstanding personality." Nevertheless, few commanders were treated with more warmth by the pilots than General Horner: he is said to have a wonderful sense of humor.

A. Loshchilin

Three takes in a cage with a lion

Remembering Andrei Mironov*

Eldar Ryazanov

I never saw Andrei angry. I saw him sad, happy, disappointed, mischievous, preoccupied, cunning, indignant, but I cannot recall a single time when he was mean, spoke about someone spitefully or when his face showed any bitterness. Whenever he was insulted, and that did happen on occasion, his eyes acquired a look of helplessness and confusion. Malice, aggressivenes and bile were not part of his character.

If one takes only Andrei's television performances, ignoring his theatrical and film roles, one gains a completely false impression of Andrei as a person. On television, he moved with grace and danced with ease, sang gaily as an actor who knew his own sometimes fop-like irresistibility as a charismatic bon viveur. This image moved some viewers to mistake it for Mironov's real personality. But in his off-stage life, he was in fact almost the complete opposite of the characters he played. He was shy, unsure and often unsatisfied with himself, easily hurt and very kind. All this did not prevent him from being lively, witty and lucid in good company, though, and when in his element, he became the centre of attention, a volcano erupting in jokes and witticisms. His humour was contagious and the stories he told, heightened in vividness and intensity by his thespian skills, always gave rise to peals of laughter. But it was not right away that I discovered these character traits of his. After seing him in his first few film and theatre roles, he seemed to me as viewer and director to be an actor possessing only negative charisma. It was clear to me from the very first that he was remarkably talented but I could not imagine him playing a positive charachter.

We first met while I was shooting the film *The Incredible Signor Detochkin*. I offered him the role of Dima Semitsvetov, a character who trades his higher education, diploma, and speciality to become an artful dodger and speculator, a role which was created by E. Braginsky and I in all honesty rather sketchily and we needed an actor who would not only play the role, but also lend it the necessary individuality and professional creativity it demanded. That is how I became acquainted with a magnificent artist with whom we eventually became good friends. We were friends for twenty years in spite of rough spots in our relationship which arose for obvious reasons.

I would not tell about our work on the film *Old Robbers* where I cast him in a small role again as a bad guy who is protected by someone higher up. Perhaps the most important result of our collaboration on that film was that the mutual feelings of affection for one another which began with our work together on the first film became even stronger. When we would meet, we would always exchange jokes, ribs and light insults delivered in jest. And by the time we started shooting *The Unusual Adventures of Italians in Russia* Andrei had become a first-rate professional who could play any role. Not long before that he played the role of a lovable thief in Leonid Gaidai's film *Diamond Arm* and his popularity became even more great. I remember how we once stood together in Zvenigorod during our lunch break under the awning of the cafeteria. A light rain was falling and we stood waiting for our Italian counterparts to finish their unappetizing (in spite of the efforts of the film administrators) lunch. After lunch we were to go to a petrol station to shoot an explosion. Andrei then told me a story about the extraordinary popularity the actor Yuri Nikulin had won among the public.

Mironov told me how one morning in Sochi they were filming a scene from the *Diamond Arm* with Nikulin, Anatoly Papanov and himself. As he tells, out of the crowd of onlookers a drunk broke through the police cordon and went right up to the place they were shooting. (All this happened at seven in the morning!) The drunk apparently saw his idol Nikulin and, brushing past Papanov and Mironov, went up to him, looking him in the eye and said: "Hey, you old son-of-a-gun!" (Actually what he said was somewhat stronger.) All this of course showed how much Nikulin the actor was loved by his fans. Andrei added that both he and Papanov felt light pangs of jealousy when the drunk didn't recognize them. Andrei and I were still laughing about that incident when a man on a bicycle wearing a jogging oufit and carrying a jug full of either beer or milk rode

*Excerpt from the book *Andrei Mironov* published by Iskusstvo Press which goes on sale in book shops this week. It consists of reminiscences compiled by Boris Poyurovsky.

up, stared Mironov intently in the eye to make sure he hadn't made a mistake and said:

"And so the old donkey has paid a call on us!"

I use the word "donkey" in place of the real word he used so as not to provoke the ire of my editors. In actuality the expression was much more colourful. All this was heightened in its humour by the fact that it took place right after Andrei had told me of the incident with Nikulin, so I chuckled and said:

"There you go, Andrei! Now you're as popular as Nikulin!.."

Working with Andrei was always an experience for several reasons. He was always extremely serious in his attitude towards work, was disciplined, accurate and was never late. In addition he had a strong sense of responsibilty and worked hard and with enthusiasm. In no way whatsoever did he exhibit the typical characteristics of actors who become overly impressed with themselves and play up their status as movie stars. He was easy going and good at improvisation. He got everything he could out of his body, sense of rhythm and speech. I remember an incident when I demanded that our Italian actors play their roles at a faster pace. They weren't able to pick up the pace and complained to the producer of the film, Dino de Laurentis that I was trying to speed things up and demanding of them the impossible. I used Andrei as proof that one can play roles at a rapid-fire pace. This pleased me all the more as in the West the view persists that the Russians are very slow-moving. (A comment which does have some basis in fact.) Andrei was simply an actor who had refined his technique to a T. But there was one more thing that film demanded – that was personal bravery. There were many stunts in the film which demanded the utmost of the actors' strength, training and phisycal ability as well as plain courage. Andrei amazed me by doing things I never would have expected of him. He was brought up in a well-to-do family of actors/intelligentsia. I doubt very much that in his childhood he participated in gangs and got involved in fights or was a hooligan or a bully. However, all the stunts which required of him a high degree of bravery he performed himself. The way things were done was that a stunt was first performed by a stuntman or athlete. After the stunt was shot, with a double, we would announce "If anyone would like to do the stunt himself, we'll shoot it another time." Naturally, I wanted the actors to do the stunts themselves. That allows one to shoot the scene from more angles and adds a sense of realism to dangerous scenes which viewers like and which makes them have more respect for the actors. Andrei always was the first to offer to do the scene himself. Once he was lowered, hanging from a carpet, from the sixth floor of the hotel Astoria in Leningrad. Another time he hung from a raised draw-bridge some 20 stories high while a ship passed beneath him.

Nor did Andrei rely on a his double when shooting the scene with King the lion. The scenes with the lion were some of the most difficult and nerve-racking as no one could crawl inside its head to find out what it was thinking. At first, everyone was very afraid of King, but then we got used to him. Finally we decided to free him of the chain around his neck. We were filming a scene in which the stunt double for Yevstigneyev (one of the trainers) was rolling around in a wheelchair. The lion was supposed to run after the wheelchair chased by the four actors Andrei Mironov, Ninetto Davoli, Alighiero Noschese and Antonia Santilli. The lion probably didn't mean any harm and probably just wanted to play when he got up on his hind legs, hugged one of the Italians and scratched up his back. (King weighed some 240 kilogrammes.) The trainer who was doubling for Yevstigneyev reacted instantly and took a crutch from the crippled person (played by Yevstigneyev) and pryed off the lion. All the actors ran and hid. Ambulances and fire engines were always on hand. The doctors bandeged up Davoli whose wounds turned out not to be that serious. But once again everyone began to fear the lion as before. The psychological injury he had caused proved to be more serious than the physical.

The next day Andrei was scheduled to go head to head with the lion and I was sure that Andrei would refuse to do the scene himself. If I had been he, I would not have tried to take the bull by the horns...

In the scene with the lion, the brave investigator Mironov played climbs down a sphinx which the lion has chased everyone up onto and has a heart-lifting talk with the lion in the manner of our propaganda with the aim of arousing a sense of conscienciousness in the lion. Three cameras were used to shoot the scene. King was not in a cage and not tied up. There was no glass panel between him and Mironov. The actors were in direct personal contact just as according to Stanislavsky's methods. The entire film crew sat on the edge of their seats.

Andrei amazed my by his bravery and resolve. He had every right to refuse to play the scene himself. After all, just the previous day there had been the unfortunate incident with the lion. However, the scene was an essential one. Andrei knew this and his sense of duty as an actor won out over his fear. On my signal (how I shook while giving it!) Mironov crawled down the sphinx. The lion, which at first was lying down, got up. On film one can see on Mironov's face the battle that was going on inside him at that moment. He was both terrified of the lion and able to control his fear. And that was precisely the emotion the role called for. Andrei did three takes. He climbed down the sphinx three times and three times chatted with the lion. The scene was shot without any camera tricks or touch-ups. Evidently Andrei amazed not only me but also the lion by his courage.

There is much more I could say about Andrei. About how he dreamt of playing serious roles; how he disliked his reputation as only a comic actor; how he was afraid of playing the same role over and over again; about his fear that he was washed up as an actor; about fears that he would stop being cast in films and about the compromise in choosing roles which came along with this... It was only among people who did not know him personally that he seemed to be always fortunate, a person for whom everything was easy and came naturally...

When Andrei passed away, our stage, screen and television lost a kind, bright, musical, charismatic, lively element of colour. Our art now seems poorer, duller. We lack horribly Mironov's smiles, his grace, his refined taste and his good-humoured irony which always shone in his wise and sad eyes... ■

Moscow. February 1991

A fantasy report from the capital of the Central Military Area of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

In conformity with the Order of the USSR Defence and Home Ministries of December 29, 1990, and with Patrol Duty Regulations, riflemen ring the city. But there's not much to do. Most of the underworld, who are to be quashed, manage to sneak through to the downtown gathering. It is cold. These valiant defenders of civic tranquility are obliged to fire at the large numbers of sparrows flocking above the Soviet capital after China's "cultural revolution," all to heat up state property.

Closer to downtown the scene is livelier. Armoured personnel carriers roar through the streets. As Lenin's Tomb is qualified as a military-strategic installation of special importance, accesses sealed off as best as possible. Under the tracks of military machines the first promise Moscow's deputy mayor Stankevich kept that is the new layer of asphalt on Manezh Square, cracks and breaks. The gains won by the democratic Moscow Soviet are reduced to ruin elsewhere along the boulevards and the Metro bridge.

Nevertheless, crowds of shady elements strive on foot to transgress the Soviet presidential edict banning demonstrations and mass processions within the Sadovy (Garden) Ring.

The gall the socially immoral riff-raff demonstrate is shocking. There, on the curb of Kalinin Prospect stands a lady with a child, who is criminally disturbing law and order with a poster that reads: "The local Party apparat is breaking the law: I've been sacked and evicted twice for speaking the truth. "Away with her!" shout civic-minded folk, whose peaceful work for the country's weal is so reliably protected henceforth. No wonder, a representative of the broad working masses, who happens to be in the vicinity immediately appeals to Moscow's military commandant to shield honest folk from this overweening recidivist. Several dozen more representatives of the broad working masses second this truly patriotic initiative. Within the hour a law enforcement group carts off this criminal element along with her baby and poster.

Tverskaya Street salutes your correspondent with gunfire. Mafia mobs continue to converge on downtown. A column of economic saboteurs approaches from Krasnaya Presnya. There shadow-economy scientists appear from Zamoskvorechiye and Lenin Prospect. In the Kirov, Lenin and Dzerzhinsky boroughs pensioner-spelculators skilled in savings banks engagements join them. "Give us cabbage!" they chant.

The hand-written slogans, the work of the mafia, leave no doubt that they are designed not only to disturb the peace, but to imperil the very life and welfare of the citizenry. "You told me I would be planting trees," reads a poster carried by an Afghansitan veteran who clearly seems out of place. Another marcher indignantly notes: "Is this the way paratroopers help to implement conscription in Lithuania?!" A third sheet reproduces an insinuation current after the Baltic events which did not disappear even after the ministerial duo's televized warning. It says: "Riflemen in the streets spell a military coup, not protection of our rights!"

The need to swing rifle butts and employ hand-to-hand fighting for protection faces a particularly knotty situation. The underworld of business sharks and demagogues hankers for an excuse to attack. The situation is further aggravated by the circumstance that under cover of the Shchit (Shield) and the Mothers organizations, criminals frankly infiltrate military units, seeking to demoralize not only barricaded garrisons, but also designing offices urgently blueprinting the latest generation of SCUD missiles to make good losses sustained in the Persian Gulf.

Drawing by Victor Bogorad

Meanwhile, columns of shady elements, who should have long been incarcerated in concentration camps, burst through to Dzerzhinsky Square where they are valiantly countered by a peaceful manifestation of ordinary Soviet citizens. Grouped around the Memorial to the glorious Chekist, two or three hundred people proudly raise above slogans exerting great appeal. Thus the streamer on the left reads: "The Party is the Mind, Honour and Conscience of Our Time". The slogan on the right runs: "Rally the Country Around the Platform of the Little Father Tsar." In between the wind ruffles bunting with the words: "The Russians and Arabs are brothers. Zionism is our common foe." Even though participation of the Pamyat national front was not officially requesated. Eyes water to see the concern athletic chaps in black show for lone elderly gents of a distinctly non-Russian type, who whine indiverse voices: "Stalin is with us!"

"Why, don't you like our order?" a rifleman barks at one of them.

"We got a good replacement," a grey-whiskered sergeant mutters. Then more loudly to the rifleman: "Take care! Have respect for people."

A western newspaperman, who by some unfathomable means has sneaked into the temporarily closed city, approaches one patrol. In halting Russian he asks: "I read the presidential edict, but find no justification for your being here?" The stalwart courteously tells the foreigner to ask the commissar for explanations, not forgetting though to politely sequester video camera and tape recorder.

There is more gunfire on Tverskaya Street. Alexander Kabakov's novel *The Non-Returnee* has been awarded a special prize by the Russian Writers' Union as the first work of the new socialist realism.

Irina Lagunina

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